Rhetorical Strategies in Late Antique Literature

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Rhetorical Strategies in Late Antique Literature

Images, Metatexts and Interpretation

Edited by

Alberto J. Quiroga Puertas

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Introduction

Lieve Van Hoof

The contributions collected in this volume find themselves at the crossroads of two blooming fields of research: Late Antiquity and ancient rhetoric. Indeed, as a result of the cultural and linguistic turns in Humanities in general, and Classics and Ancient History in particular, scholars have not only opened up a range of texts that were previously undervalued and understudied, they have also developed a variegated range of interpretative strategies to analyse these texts. The current volume illustrates both these projects and achievements: studying well-known texts such as Eusebius' *Life of Constantine* alongside texts that were, for a long time, mostly neglected or considered to be of lesser quality, such as Methodius' *Symposium*, its various contributions also present a rich variety of interpretative models. In the following pages, I offer a survey of the individual chapters, followed by a brief discussion of the threads connecting them.

In the first chapter, Lorenzo Miletti examines the reasons behind Aelius Aristides' (117–181) extraordinary popularity in Late Antiquity. A first reason is Aristides' mysticism and inspiration by a single God, understandable to both pagan and Christian readers in Late Antiquity. Secondly, Miletti shows that Aristides' public exposure of himself and his ill health was, in many cases, rhetorically apt to the performative context of the Asclepieion of Pergamum, where the orator could thus present himself as an exemplary patient to fellow sufferers. As a result, ancient audiences and authors, far from interpreting the prominent place of Aristides' person and illness in his speeches as a sign of an egocentric, neurotic nature, as many scholars in the past couple of centuries have done, found it acceptable and even admirable. A third reason for Aristides' popularity in Late Antiquity is his nuanced position towards Plato: whilst Aristides conquers the hearts of rhetoricians such as Themistius and Synesius by criticizing Plato's stance on rhetoric, he also manages to keep Platonists such as Porphyry on board by amply quoting Plato. Aristides could thus function as a mediator between rhetoricians and philosophers in Late Antiquity. Fourth, Aristides both surpasses Isocrates by treating his topics in Demosthenic style, and updates him to the new reality of a Greek world dominated by Rome. Last but not least, Aristides also became a model of rhetorical practice and theory through several types of encomiastic speeches, through his Atticism and style, and through his pious and moderate ethical outlook. All in all, Aristides thus manages to tap into themes and discourses such as monotheism, Greek identity

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under Roman dominion, and the relation between rhetoric and philosophy, that were, in Late Antiquity, as relevant as ever.

The second chapter, by Ryan C. Fowler, presents a study of the use of the term and idea of *sophrosyne* in the *Symposium* of Methodius of Olympus (d. c. 311). As Fowler demonstrates, Methodius defends (his own, Christian interpretation of) Plato against the encratites by arguing that *sophrosyne* is not so much about chastity in the sense of absolute restraint of the body, but about understanding the form of "chastity" proper to oneself—in some cases virginity, in others well-practiced marriage and procreation or even remarriage—, and to harmonize one's impulses accordingly. In line with the topic of the volume, rhetoric is shown to play a key role in developing Methodius' view on *sophrosyne*: by developing the definition of *sophrosyne* progressively through the eleven main speeches included in the dialogue, Methodius manages to show the superiority of his own definition over that of his encratist opponents.

In the following chapter, Guadalupe Lopetegui Semperena discusses two Latin apologetics: Arnobius' *Adversus nationes* and Firmicus Maternus' *De errore profanarum religionum*. As both authors were converts to Christianity and composed (in the case of Arnobius, at least the final version of) their apologetics after the Edict of Milan, scholars have often associated both texts under the common denominator of "post-Constantinian apologetics". Yet, whilst acknowledging shared characteristics, Lopetegui Semperena demonstrates how the different argumentative aims, target audiences, and political-ideological contexts brought about by the more than thirty years that separate both works, lead Arnobius and Maternus to adopt substantially different rhetorical strategies: whereas Arnobius, especially in his first book, uses induction and deduction in an almost dialectical set-up in order to refute the accusation that Christianity caused the evils and confusion experienced by his late-third and early-fourth century contemporaries, Maternus, writing under Constantius II and Constans and addressing the emperors alongside a more general readership, produces something that resembles a sermon, full of Biblical references, in order to exhort these readers to ban any public, respectively personal, pagan cults. These differences illustrate not just the varying outlook of Arnobius and Maternus, but also testify to the continuing pragmatism of rhetoric in Late Antiquity: as opposed to what has sometimes been suggested, rhetoric continued to be a creative and powerful speech act.

In chapter four, José Torres Guerra examines Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*. Building on recent research on the use of images in that text, Torres Guerra zooms in on the relation between word and image in Eusebius' account of the Council of Nicaea. After a discussion of the various senses of the word "image"—which includes material images as well as symbols and signs—he

demonstrates that Eusebius (c. 260–340), whilst discussing the difficulty of matching images with words, manages to create a verbal image of Constantine's entry at the Council, which visually symbolizes the unity and harmony of the Church, and turns it into an image of the Kingdom of God. In this way, Eusebius manages to paint with words just like the emperor created or inspired material images and arranged for stark visual appearances. All these images, in turn, stimulate the desire "to divine affection by the imitation of noble deeds" (*Life of Constantine* 1.10.2–3, quoted on p. 89).

The next chapter is by the editor of the volume, Alberto Quiroga Puertas, and analyses rhetorical strategies in Julian's *Caesars*. As Quiroga Puertas demonstrates, Julian (d. 363) brilliantly combines different literary forms in such a way as to support his religious, philosophical and political programme. More particularly, the opening scene, which describes an assembly of the gods, is shown to be permeated by Neoplatonic symbolism. In order to do so, Julian not only draws attention to the ecphrastic nature of the scene, but also reflects on the impossibility of describing the sublunar realm of divinity with human words. The second part of the text, by contrast, subverts the rules of the *basilikos logos* in a description of Roman emperors, culminating with Julian himself as a protégé of Mithras. This conscious subversion of literary norms allows Julian as it were to signal the extraordinary nature of his political and religious agenda. By combining two very different literary codes in a single text, moreover, he manages to underline the difference between the divine and the human realms—even in the case of emperors who, in contemporary presentations, were often depicted as an image of the gods.

Chapter six focuses on Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 329–390) as a pivotal figure in adopting and adapting Atticist rhetoric on Asianism to a Christian context. As Byron MacDougall demonstrates, Gregory ingeniously applies Dionysius of Halicarnassus' negative depiction of the spread of Asianism to the travels of George of Cappadocia, one of Gregory's main Arian contemporary opponents. By doing so, he manages to criticize not only George of Cappadocia's personality, but also essentialist Arian theories of language. At the same time, Gregory's use of Dionysius assimilates the role of Athanasius with that of Rome, as a law-giver restoring order. Gregory's re-use of classical rhetoric thus integrates linguistic, philosophical and religious controversies, as well as contemporary political reality. And Gregory was not the end of the story: Theodoret of Cyrus, in turn, turned Gregory's rhetoric against George of Cappadocia against one of the main heresiological leaders of his own days, Nestorius of Antioch.

Leonardo Lugaresi continues the volume with a chapter that zooms in on the connection between John Chrysostom's polemic against theatres on the one

hand, and the theatrical rhetoric he uses to this end, on the other. Introducing the concepts of the "exterior" versus the "interior" stage, Lugaresi shows how John (c. 349–407) emphasizes over and over again that theatrical performances on the exterior stage (e.g., in the theatre), far from being innocent spectacles from which the spectator can walk away unharmed, are interiorized and performed again on the interior stage of the spectator's mind and soul, thus turning him away from virtue. In order to break the spell of theatre, John *rhetorizes* the exterior stage: by discussing and analyzing theatre in his speeches, performed outside of the chronotope of the theatre, John shows the ontological and ethical discrepancy between appearance and truth which the theatre implies. John thus diplays a great "semiological competence (…): he is aware that the significance of a message is closely related to the medium through which it is transmitted and to the communicative situation within which it takes place" (p. 144).

Chapter eight, by Javier Campos Daroca, is concerned with Eunapius' *Lives of the Sophists*. If recent scholarship has mostly read these *Lives* as a series of variants of the ideal life—and thus, in a sense, a pagan version of Christian collective biographies—, Campos Daroca makes a case for giving more attention to individual details and differences in Eunapius' *Lives*. In order to do so, he explores the references to Socrates in Eunapius' descriptions of the lives of various philosophers. Whilst Eunapius (born c. 346) always emphasizes the importance of the link between rhetoric and philosophy, i.e. style of speech and philosophical ethos, the implementation of the latter greatly differs across the *Lives*. Chrysanthius, for example, is said to embody the Platonic Socrates through his unaffected and simple character, thus offering an example of an ethical, i.e. more contemplative, kind of life. Other philosophers, such as Alypius and Sopatros, by contrast, follow Socrates' "political" example in leading an active life in which they try to influence policies and rulers. Interestingly, as Campos Daroca points out, Eunapius also offers a metabiographical discourse that emphasizes the importance of narrating both kinds of philosophical life appropriately by setting himself apart from earlier biographers, be they well-known authors of collective biographies such as Plutarch, or subjects included in Eunapius' *Lives* who also wrote other philosophers' lives. In this way, Eunapius manages, for example, to set his own, rather historiographical biography of Alypius against Iamblichus' *Life of Alypius*, which, according to Eunapius, failed to explain Alypius' various deeds and the causal relationship between them as it focused too much on ethics, and too little on politics.

The last chapter, finally, deals with Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* (fifth century). In it, Laura Miguélez-Cavero describes the *ekphrasis* of the necklace which Aphrodite, in disguise, gives to her daughter Harmonia, so as to make her agree to

marry Cadmus. Miguélez-Cavero not only discusses the details of the *ekphrastic* technique, but also confronts Nonnus' description with contemporary jewellery as well as with literary precedents, and links it with the rest of the *Dionysiaca*. In this way, she shows the interpretative work that is necessary in order to fully understand the *ekphrasis*, which already required a high degree of paideia in Late Antiquity, and which is even harder for us than for Nonnus' contemporary readers.

Overall, then, the contents of this volume span a rich variety of topics: its contributions deal with texts from the second to the fifth centuries A.D., with Christian as well as pagan authors who wrote mostly in Greek, but also in Latin, and with genres as diverse as the philosophical dialogue and epic poetry. Nevertheless, all the chapters contained in the volume, irrespective of their topic and chosen interpretative methodologies, are connected to each other by one or more common threads, which allow for three important conclusions to be drawn from the volume as a whole.

First, the contributions to this volume individually and collectively confirm what has repeatedly been argued in the past years, viz. that rhetoric remained fully alive in Late Antiquity: not only did rhetoric continue to be actively practised and publicly performed, it was also creatively adapted to ever changing religious and political circumstances. Lopetegui, for example, clearly demonstrates how different aims, contexts and target audiences lead Arnobius and Maternus to choose different rhetorical arguments and strategies. Again, Fowler illustrates how even in a philosophical dialogue, the clever use of rhetoric allows the author to score his point against philosophical opponents. And MacDougall shows how classical rhetorical themes and topoi were thus used and reused to great effect in ever changing religious debates.

A second point that comes to the fore in many of the contributions to this volume is the prominence of metatexts. This suggests that late antique authors, independently of the genre in which they were writing, engaged in rhetoric and literature *consciously*: they not only used rhetoric in order to reach their goals, they also reflected on their own practices, as well as on their place within the literary tradition. While Torres Guerra, for example, emphasizes Eusebius' explicit reflections on the possibilities and difficulties of describing images with words, Miguélez-Cavero analyses how Nonnus' ekphrasis of Harmonia's necklace allows the author to place himself in a long and rich literary tradition. On a less explicit level, Lugaresi highlights John Chrysostom's semiological competence, and Quiroga Puertas shows how Julian's ingenious deployment and combination of literary forms as it were embodies the text's message. In line with this, several of the late antique authors covered in this volume also actively think about language: as MacDougall shows, Gregory of Nazianzus, for

example, criticizes not only the personality of George of Cappadocia, but also the theories of language held by his Arian supporters.

Finally, the contributions contained in this volume also underline the importance of taking rhetoric into account if we are to come to a correct interpretation of the texts studied here. Indeed, as Miletti shows, if we are to avoid psychoanalytical verdicts on Aelius Aristides' public self-exposure as a sufferer, we should take into account the performative context, in Pergamum's Asclepieion, of his rhetoric. Likewise, Campos Daroca demonstrates that careful attention not just for the presence of classical examples, but for their precise rhetorical elaboration at different points in the text, forces us to rethink the function of Eunapius' *Lives*, as this work thus turns out to have more attention for differences between individual philosophers and sophists than has sometimes been suggested in the model that presents the work as a pagan version of Christian collective biographies.

Taken together, then, the contributions assembled here by Alberto J. Quiroga Puertas not only discuss a rich palette of authors, topics and interpretative strategies, they also make some crucial points about late antique rhetoric—points that will be of interest to scholars of Late Antiquity as well as ancient rhetoric and beyond.

CHAPTER 1

"I Also Have to Dialogue with the Posterity". Aelius Aristides' Legacy to the Late Antiquity

Lorenzo Miletti

As recent scholarship has pointed out, the orator Aelius Aristides, who was a pivotal figure in the sophistic of the second century CE, had a remarkable fortune throughout the Late Antiquity and the whole Byzantine period. He was a model for the rhetoricians of the so-called Third Sophistic and, later, of the School of Gaza, not to mention Byzantine authors like Photius, Psellos, Thomas Magister, and Theodore Metochites. Also from the more "technical" perspective of the rhetorical theory, Aristides' speeches were considered models by influential rhetoricians like Hermogenes, Menander, and so on.[1]

Aristides' fortune for such a long period is, on the one hand, unexpected for the readers of today, who are led, in browsing the modern handbooks of Greek literature, to view Aristides as a "minor" author. On the other hand, such a fortune is indeed a phenomenon which raises several questions and needs a detailed analysis, especially as regards its causes and premises.

On the basis of the progresses recently made on Aristides' *Nachleben*, I will try, in the following pages, to explore some specific characteristics of Aristides' literary production which enabled the growth of such an illustrious reputation from the Late Antiquity on.[2] Many—perhaps too many—aspects of Aristides' works could be taken into consideration for such a purpose; nevertheless, by isolating and discussing specific topics and arguments, and by evaluating the

1 After some pioneering remarks in Boulanger (1923: 450–458), extensive and thorough analysis of Aristides' fortune from the second to the fifteenth centuries are Robert (2008; 2009; 2012), with reconstruction of the lost works. Other relevant studies on Aristides' *Fortleben* in the Late Antiquity will be mentioned below, throughout the whole contribution. As for the Byzantine period, which falls outside this paper's purpose, see Quattrocelli (2008) on Arethas; Lenz (1964), Bompaire (1981), and Brillante (2015) on Photius; Conti Bizzarro (2016) on Thomas Magister; Gigante (1969) and Pernot (2006: 100–115) on Theodore Metochites. Suitable discussions, focusing in particular on Aristides' reception in early modern Italy, are Fontanella (2013) and Caso (2016).

2 Synthetic studies mentioning the problem of the *causes* of Aristides' fortune are Jones (2008b: 120–124), and Cribiore (2008) on the sole Libanius.

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speeches which are more frequently quoted by late antique sources, I will argue that Aristides' great fortune is better understandable at the light of five factors: 1) the fact that the orator claims to be inspired and protected by a single and salvific god, Asclepius; 2) the prominent presence of an authorial and suffering "self" in the speeches; 3) a close dialogue with Platonism; 4) the effort to define a new Hellenic identity under the Roman Empire; 5) a pioneering theory and a refined practice of rhetoric which allowed Aristides to be perceived as an *alter* Demosthenes.

Before briefly discussing these points separately, I ask the readers' pardon if, given the breadth of each topic, my arguments seem no more than notes and suggestions.

1 Mysticism and Inspiration by a Single God

A first, major characteristic of Aristides' personality which may have encouraged his posthumous fortune is his exclusive and all-absorbing relationship with a healing god, Asclepius.

From this perspective, Aristides' works, with their focus on a one-to-one relationship between divine and human, may have "spoken" to readers of later periods, in which monotheism was a widely increasing phenomenon and the pagan-Christian dialectic involved spiritual problems which could resonate with some of Aristides' pages. An example may be found in Aristides' description of the incubation rituals which characterized the life of the sanctuaries of Asclepius, where both the dreams and the mediation of the priests played a relevant role. From a religious-historical point of view, Aristides' *Sacred Tales* (*Ors.* 47–52), with their reports of miraculous healings, of epiphanies of Asclepius, of dreams, and with their accounts of daily life in the temple, are important witnesses about how the incubation worked in the Asclepieia of the second century AD.[3] Since incubation rituals later formed the basis not only of pagan, but also of Christian religious practices, Aristides may well have constituted *ipso facto* a subject of interest in Late Antiquity.[4]

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3 See the recent works of Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) and Israelowich (2012).

4 A connection between Aristides' *Sacred Tales* and the late antique approach to dreams (including Christian incubation rituals) is already in Dodds (1965: 39–47). More recent works on late antique Christian and pagan healing practices connected with dreams and incubation rituals are Bernardi (2006); Markschies (2007); Wiśniewski (2013), all with up-to-date bibliography. See also Aslanov (2015) for an attempt to use Aristides as source for late antique Christian and Jewish rituals connected with healing.

Here, however, letting aside such possible resonances between Aristides' life and works and late antique rituals—a theme which goes beyond our competence—, we will focus on Aristides' relationship with Asclepius from a rhetorical and literary perspective.

As anticipated above, this relationship is described throughout the rhetorician's whole production, and especially in the *Sacred Tales*, which are entirely conceived under the aegis of this healer god, and were performed before an audience composed by Asclepius' devotees.[5] If, on the one hand, Aristides' orthodox paganism is clearly attested, among others, by his prose hymns devoted to several Olympian gods[6] and by his epigraphic dedications,[7] it is also true that, on the other hand, Asclepius' influence on him is not comparable with that of any other deity. Asclepius is above all an existential guide, to be invoked more than other gods.[8] In more than one occasion he is defined by Aristides with the epithet ὁ προστάτης: "the guide", but also "the patron", or "the protector".[9] Since Aristides' life is wholly devoted to rhetoric (except, of course, when the disease prevents him from performing) and the borders between curing himself and practicing the declamations are very blurred, it is not surprising that Asclepius is also a rhetorical guide. When he comes to visit Aristides in dreams, he suggests therapies to his illness, but also encourages him to perform declamations in order to heal.[10] In some passages of the *Sacred Tales*, Asclepius is represented as proposing to the rhetorician authors to emulate, as well as arguments and subjects for the declamations.[11] Thus, the god is not only Aristides' healer and doctor, is also his teacher of rhetoric.

Such a special and privileged connection with this god, which involves both medical and rhetorical problems, is grounded on a personal connexion which often seems to go further than the "classical" man-god relationship of the Olympian religion. Asclepius speaks directly with Aristides in many ways, dreams being the primary but not the only one: as explained by the rhetorician himself, sometimes Asclepius visits him "with his sole presence".[12] Another

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5 On the *Sacred Tales* see Behr (1968a); Nicosia (1979); Quet (1993); Petsalis-Diomidis (2010: 122–150); Israelowich (2012); Downie (2013).

6 *Ors*. 37–46, on which see Goeken (2012).

7 See Puech (2002: 138–145).

8 *Or*. 48.4: πάντως δ' ἐστὶν πρὸς ἅπαντα κλητός, εἰ δή τις θεῶν. Here and hereafter, quotations are drawn from Keil (1898).

9 *Or*. 28.156; 39.18; 42.15.

10 See, e.g., *Or*. 50.14.

11 Cf. e.g. *Or*. 50.15, 24–26, etc.

12 *Or*. 47.3: τὰ μὲν ἐκ τοῦ φανεροῦ παρών, τὰ δὲ τῇ πομπῇ τῶν ἐνυπνίων ἐνεδείκνυτο.

major moment of communication is when Aristides is engaged in a rhetorical performance. In these occasions, he is directly inspired by the god, establishing a kind of *unio* which can be defined as mystical. This mysticism appears in the *Sacred Tales*, though we can also find passages in which Aristides explains in a very detailed way how the god inspires him when he is performing a speech in *Or.* 28, in which Aristides defends himself against the accusation of praising himself during the performance of a prose hymn to Athena.[13] In a long section of this speech, Aristides transfers to the rhetorical context what the ancient sources attributed to poetic inspiration. Here the rhetorical experience is described in the language of ancient mystery religion, i.e. as something to which it is necessary to be initiated.[14] Aristides does not simply speak about himself, rather he theorizes that this is the correct condition of any "true" orator. The declamation itself is here described as the product of a divine inspiration.

> I am afraid that I am talking to one who is deaf. And in a certain way I am betraying the mystery by revealing the sacred rites to one who is uninitiated. But still like a kind of secret tale in a religious myth, it will be told to those who can understand it, but no more to you. [114] I say that whenever the light of god has come over the speaker (…) and it has possessed his soul like a drink which has come from the springs of Apollo, then straightway it fills him with strength and warmth and good spirits, and lifts up his eyes and causes his hair to rise; and a man in such a state—call him dancer, or bacchant as you wish—looks to no other thing, either present or absent, than to the words themselves […][15]

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13 For this speech see Miletti (2011), with commentary.

14 The same idea is also present in Aristides' *Or.* 34, whose title is, meaningfully, Κατὰ τῶν ἐξορχουμένων, *Against those who burlesque the mysteries* (rhetorical mysteries, of course). On this speech see Vix (2010). In general, on the image of rhetoric as a mysteric discipline, see Pernot (2014a).

15 *Or.* 28.113–114: δέδοικα μὲν οὖν μὴ παρὰ κωφὸν λέγω καί τινα τρόπον ἐξορχοῦμαι δεικνὺς ἀμυήτῳ τὰ ἱερά· ὅμως δὲ ὥσπερ ἐν μύθῳ τις ἀπόρρητος λόγος τοῖς μὲν ἀκούειν δυνατοῖς εἰρήσεται, σοὶ δὲ οὐδὲν μᾶλλον. [114] λέγω γὰρ οὖν ὡς ἐπειδὰν περιέλθῃ τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ φῶς … καὶ κατάσχῃ τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ λέγοντος, ὥσπερ τι πῶμα παρελθὸν ἐξ Ἀπόλλωνος πηγῶν, εὐθὺς μὲν τόνου καὶ θέρμης ἐνέπλησεν μετ᾽ εὐθυμίας, ἦρεν δὲ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἄνω καὶ τὰς τρίχας διέστησε, βλέπει δὲ οὐδ᾽ εἰς ἓν ἄλλο ὁ τοιοῦτος, εἴτε χορευτὴν εἴτε βάκχον βούλει λέγειν, οὔτε παρὸν οὔτε ἀπὸν, ἀλλ᾽ ἢ πρὸς αὐτοὺς τοὺς λόγους … Here and hereafter, the translations of Aristides are drawn from Behr (1981–1986).

The arguments and the terminology employed in these passages are influenced above all by Plato's *Phaedrus*,[16] but they serve to promote an idea of rhetoric which is all-encompassing, mystical, and an idea of the orator as a sort of religious leader, which has something in common with the problematic (and today perhaps old-fashioned) pattern of the θεῖος ἀνήρ.[17] Inside the relationship with his public and—one may say—with the rest of the world, Aristides enjoys a condition of privilege, namely that of being in continuous and direct contact with Asclepius. And because of this privilege Aristides considers himself superior to his public, and definitely not a *primus inter pares*: he is like a general speaking to his troops, or like a captain leading his sailors.[18]

But this leadership is derived from a deep knowledge of the divine and from the experience of physical suffering. Aristides benefits from the direct intervention of a healer god. This implies that the experience of his own illness is absolutely central, and has consequences dealing with his capacity of writing and performing speeches, and teaching to students. Aristides is an ill rhetorician, whose safety lies in Asclepius' hands. This brings us to the second point of our short discussion, namely the (omni)presence of Aristides' "ill self" in his orations.

2 The Prominence of the "Self"

As is well known, Aristides has a relevant place in the history of the "autobiography" in Antiquity.[19] He develops several speeches by talking about himself and about his ill body and his efforts to be healed by the supernatural force of Asclepius. This is not at all surprising, and the case of Aristides is not an isolated one. In general, in the Imperial Age and in the Late Antiquity, the pattern of the "suffering self" was widespread among both Christians and pagan writers: as has been recently pointed out, the references to their own diseases by authors like Aristides and Marcus Aurelius or, on the Christian side, Ignatius of Antioch, should be read as expressions of a culture which was "using representations of bodily pain and suffering to construct a new subjectivity of the human person".[20]

16 Miletti (2011: 195).

17 Cf. again Plato, *R.* 1.331e; 6.500c–e. On the modern scholarly myth of the θεῖος ἀνήρ see the bibliography with *status quaestionis* in Kemezis (2014: 106 n. 29).

18 See *Or.* 28.126.

19 On this topic see Quet (1993).

20 Perkins (1995: 173).

The centrality of Aristides' "ill self" is evident in the *Sacred Tales*, but also in other works. In oration 28, many arguments are carried on through a self-representation as a suffering orator, whose excellence is due to a natural skill, but also to the privileged relationship with Asclepius. Since, as seen above, he is accused of being a boaster, Aristides points to his sober life, characterized by, among other things, the managing of his illness, connection with competent doctors, and, of course, with the god himself:

> Can you say, by the gods, that I did this without any need, but that I indulged in these fripperies without a real purpose according to the custom and pomposity of the sophist and for the sake of mere show? Do not all men know how far I am from this? (…) What motion of the hands or grimace of the lips have I been accustomed to use intentionally beyond the limits of moderation? [129] What mournful form of dress, like those speakers who have ere now covered their heads with their clothes? (…) Yet although I need more protection than most men require, still I avoided this cover (…) But I am satisfied if ever I can get through my delivery of the actual speech and what necessarily pertains to it, and I do not add imported trouble for myself.[21]

The same topics are clearly developed also in *Or.* 33, *To those who blame him for not declaiming*:

> Beginning at that point to this day I have lived by devoting my time to studies and oratory, except when I was prevented by the requirements of health or by periods bringing misfortunes which were too great for the life which I have chosen. Still we survived even in these circumstances, clinging to our raft like a kind of Odysseus, since we did not sail alone, but under the protection of the greatest and most humane helmsman, who has ever kept our boats from sinking.[22]

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21 *Or.* 28.128–129: ἐκεῖνο πρὸς θεῶν ἔχεις εἰπεῖν, ὡς ἄρα χρείας μὲν οὐδεμιᾶς ἕνεκα οὐδὲν ἔδρων, τηνάλλως δὲ σοφιστοῦ νόμῳ καὶ χαυνότητι ταῦτα ἐκομψευόμην καὶ σχήματος εἵνεκα; οὐ πάντες ἐμοὶ συνίσασιν ὅσον τούτων χωρὶς εἰμί; οὐ πᾶν ἕτερον τὸ ἡμέτερον; … ποίαν ἢ χειρῶν ἐγὼ κίνησιν, ἢ χειλῶν παραγωγὴν ἐξεπίτηδες περαιτέρω τοῦ μετρίου νενόμικα; [129] ποῖον ἐσθῆτος σχῆμα λυπηρόν, ὥσπερ ἤδη τινὲς αὑτοὺς ἀπέκρυψαν τοῖς ἱματίοις …· καίτοι πλείονος σκέπης ἢ κατὰ τοὺς πολλοὺς δεόμενος, ὅμως τὸ πρόβλημα τοῦτο ἔφυγον. […] ἀλλ᾽ ἔμοιγε ἱκανὸν, ἂν περὶ αὐτοὺς τοὺς λόγους καὶ τἀναγκαῖα πραγματευόμενος οἷός τε ὦ διαγίγνεσθαι, μηδὲν ἐπακτὸν κακὸν ἐμαυτῷ προστιθέμενος.

22 *Or.* 33.18: ἀρξάμενος δ᾽ ἐξ ἐκείνου δεῦρ᾽ ἀεὶ διαγέγονα σχολάζων μαθήμασι καὶ λόγοις ὅσα μὴ

Thus, Aristides' eloquence is displayed *notwithstanding* his ill condition, and with a remarkable moderation. A first reception of such an image of Aristides is found in his contemporary Galen, who (quite encomiastically) stresses the contrast between Aristides' rhetorical strength and his body's weakness.[23]

The struggle against his own disease is indeed a part of the construction of his self-portrait as a rhetorician. Despite an excessively psychoanalyzing orientation of many modern scholars,[24] it is clear that Aristides' "publicly exposed" illness has a rhetorical motivation.[25] The fact that many of Aristides' speeches are pronounced in the context of the Asclepian sanctuary of Pergamum, or in that of Smyrna,[26] implies that the audience shares with the speaker most of their spiritual tendencies, including those connected to illness and sickness, since the sanctuary is above all a healing place. Thus, to speak about his own disease also means to evoke issues shared with the whole audience. The fact that he often describes his disease as a condition of anxiety, or as a sensation of infirmity which involves quite generic symptoms, may cause a direct identification in most of his listeners. That is also why Aristides, notwithstanding a detailed description of his symptoms, focuses above all on his reaction to the illness under Asclepius' guidance. In doing so, he offers to the public a model of the exemplary patient, active in his role, more competent than the physicians he consults, in so far as he is encouraged by Asclepius himself. This is true for the *Sacred Tales*, and also for other speeches, like *Or.* 28:

> Even when we were physically stricken, we did not come to ignoble supplication of the doctors. But although, to speak by the grace of the gods, we possessed the friendship of the finest doctors, we took refuge in the

χρεία σώματος διεκώλυσεν ἢ χρόνων περίοδοι συμφορὰς ἐνεγκοῦσαι μείζους τῆς προαιρέσεως. ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως κἀν τούτοις διεγιγνόμεθα ὥσπερ τις Ὀδυσσεύς, ἐχόμενοι τῆς σχεδίας, ἅτε οὐδ᾽ ἔρημοι πλέοντες ἡμεῖς γε, ἀλλ᾽ ὑπὸ τῷ μεγίστῳ καὶ φιλανθρωποτάτῳ τῶν κυβερνητῶν, ὅς ἡμῖν ἀεὶ … ἀνεῖχεν τὸ μὴ καταδῦναι.

23 Gal. *In Plat.* Tim. *comm.* 87e5–88b5, p. 33 Schröder (Arabian text). On Galen and Aristides see Boudon-Millot (2016).

24 See Gourevitch and Gourevitch (1968); Michenaud and Dierkens (1972); Hazard-Guillon (1983); Quet (1993: 213–216) has underlined how such a hostile attitude towards Aristides (an "odium psychologicum") dates back no more than a couple of centuries.

25 The rhetorical implications of Aristides' self-representation as an ill and suffering orator are also discussed in Downie (2011) and, more extensively, in Downie (2013).

26 On the Asclepian sanctuaries as declamation contexts for Aristides' performances see Nicosia (1979), and Miletti (forthcoming), with bibliography.

> temple of Asclepius, in the belief that if it was fated for us to be saved, it was better to be saved by his agency, and that if it was not possible, it was time to die.[27]

The fact that Aristides sometimes mentions his disease also in speeches which are read or pronounced before more heterogeneous audiences—declamations, public assemblies, and so on—implies that, on the one hand, such a self-presentation has become a characteristic of Aristides' *ethos* and, on the other hand, that also an audience which does not coincide with the followers of Asclepius is probably ready to listen such self-oriented speeches, or, alternatively, is ready to accept them because of the orator's authority itself.

The fact that such an attitude was a fruitful model for later rhetoricians is testified by Libanius. This orator is a real "fan" of Aelius Aristides, as is witnessed, for instance, by epistle 1534, in which he extensively observes with admiration a portrait of Aristides which he had received by a correspondent of his.[28] In Libanius, the emulation of Aristides is clearly perceivable at different levels. He not only uses specific Aristidean orations as models for his own writing (see for instance *Or.* 64, a response to the lost Aristidean speech *Against the dancers*),[29] but in the *Autobiography* (*Or.* 1) he arrives to present himself and his illness in a way that can hardly be fully understood without a strict reference to the Aristidean model of the *Sacred Tales*.[30]

3 The Defence of Rhetoric and the Dialogue with the Platonism

Another element which encouraged Aristides' rise as a model in the Late Antiquity was his attitude to dialogue with the philosophers, and in particular with the Platonists of his times. It is well known that Aristides was not among the followers of Plato: orations 2–4, the so-called Platonic Orations constitute

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27 *Or.* 28.132: ἡμεῖς τοι καὶ εἰς τὸ σῶμα πληγέντες οὐκ ἐπ᾽ ἀγεννεῖς ἱκετείας ἰατρῶν ἀφικόμεθα, ἀλλὰ καίτοι σὺν θεοῖς εἰπεῖν τοὺς ἀρίστους τῶν ἰατρῶν φίλους κεκτημένοι κατεφύγομεν εἰς Ἀσκληπιοῦ, νομίσαντες εἴτε δέοι σῴζεσθαι, δι᾽ ἐκείνου κάλλιον εἶναι, εἴτε μὴ ἐγχωροῖ, καιρὸν εἶναι τεθνάναι.

28 The relevance of this epistle to understand Libanius' attitude towards Aristides is stressed by Cribiore (2008: 266–267; 2013: 144).

29 A thorough reconstruction of this speech through the passages of Libanius' *Or.* 64 is in Robert (2012: 335–418). Cribiore (2008: 271–273) underlines how also other orations by Libanius have Aristides as model, like *Or.* 3, which is indebted with Aristides' *Or.* 33. The same is possible for Libanius' *Or.* 60, influenced by Aristides' *Or.* 22, see Johnson (2011).

30 Cribiore (2008: 269–271; 2013: 58, 90). See also Watts (2014).

a polemic response to Plato's (and the Platonists') criticism against rhetoric. More specifically, Aristides' polemic is twofold: on the one hand (*Or.* 2, Πρὸς Πλάτωνα περὶ ῥητορικῆς) he engages in a defence of rhetoric as a discipline, having as his target essentially Plato's *Gorgias*. On the other hand, he patriotically undertakes an apology for the four great Greek politicians (and orators) who had been attacked by Plato in the same dialogue, i.e. Miltiades, Themistocles, Cimon, and Pericles, and who, on the contrary, deserve an encomium for having devoted their entire life to Athens (*Or.* 3, Πρὸς Πλάτωνα ὑπὲρ τῶν τεττάρων). *Or.* 4 (Πρὸς Καπίτωνα) is a moderate response to the Platonist Capiton, who criticized him for writing *Or.* 2.

Thus, to refute Plato means, in Aristides, to speak in favour of the Greek rhetorical and political tradition. Such an attitude may well have been approved by the rhetoricians and the teachers of rhetoric of any period, including, of course, those of Late Antiquity and the Byzantine age: it is not by chance that the Platonic orations are among the most quoted by later sources,[31] and among the few which are testified by the papyri.[32] Centuries later, Photius dedicated to these works a long section of his *Bibliotheca*.[33]

Aristides' judgement on Plato as philosopher and writer, however, is far from being negative, as it may appear at first glance, and this is relevant in order to understand the later reception. On the one hand, Aristides claims that Plato does not deserve pride of place among the most celebrated Greek authors, especially if compared to Homer or Demosthenes. This is very clear from a passage of the fifth sacred tale, in which Aristides dreams of being in a temple consecrated to Plato:

> Yet when someone said that there ought to be three temples of Plato, "Why not—I said extravagantly—eighty of Demosthenes, and of Homer at any rate, I think?" And, having said this, I added: "But perhaps it is proper to consecrate temples to the gods but to honor famous men with the offering of books ..."[34]

31 See Robert (2008: 1166–1167), who provides a statistic table which has not been published in the later revision (Robert [2012]), but whose more relevant data are discussed in Robert (2009). According to this table, *Or.* 2 is the most cited (110 times) by later authors until the end of the Byzantine age, second only to *Or.* 1 *Panathenaicus* (134 times: see also below, chapter 4); see also Robert (2009: 152).

32 More specifically, *Or.* 3.135–136, 220–221 is in the *Antinoe Papyrus* III 182; see Stroppa (2011: 189–190).

33 Phot. *Bibl.* 247–248. See Robert (2008: 1214) and Brillante (2015).

34 *Or.* 51.63: εἰπόντος δέ τινος ὡς καὶ τρεῖς ἔδει νεὼς εἶναι Πλάτωνός γε, 'τί δ' οὐ καὶ Δημοσθένους,

On the other hand, such a *deminutio* must not be misinterpreted, or over-interpreted. Aristides does not despise philosophy in general and Platonism in particular. It is well known that he also had a philosophical education and a thorough competence in Platonic issues:[35] Asclepius has ordered to him to "talk with Socrates, Demosthenes and Thucydides", i.e. to be very competent in (Platonic) philosophy, rhetoric and historiography (50.14). Aristides dreams that the philosopher Rosander compares him to Plato and Demosthenes (50.19); he also dreams that Plato himself, handling a scroll containing epistle VII, talks with him about his skill as epistolographer (50.57). In a very suggestive passage of the fourth sacred tale, he reports of a dream, in which he discusses Plato with Pyrallianus, a Platonist who was indeed a friend of his:

> I dreamed that I was walking on a certain road through my estate, and was gazing at the star which had just now appeared, for my path was towards the east. Pyrallianus, from the Temple, a man who was a comrade of ours and one highly trained in Plato's dialogues, was present. [56] Jesting and bantering with him, as it were on a leisurely walk, I said, "Can you tell me, by the Gods,—we are entirely alone—why you Platonists put on this mummery and shock men?" This remark of mine was in reference to Plato's dialogues about nature and being. And he ordered me to pay attention and walk behind him. Then he led and I followed. And having gone a little ways, he held up his hand and showed me a certain place in heaven. And at the same time as he showed it, he said, "This, as far as you are concerned, is what Plato calls the soul of the Universe". I looked up and I saw Asclepius of Pergamum established in heaven.[36]

ἔφην ὑπερβαλὼν, ὀγδοήκοντα, καὶ Ὁμήρου γε, οἶμαι;' καὶ ἔτι ταῦτα λέγων, 'ἀλλ' ἴσως, ἔφην, τοὺς μὲν νεὼς τοῖς θεοῖς προσήκει καθιεροῦν, τοὺς δὲ ἄνδρας τοὺς ἐλλογίμους τῇ τῶν βιβλίων ἀναθέσει τιμᾶν' …

35 See also Goeken (2012: 303–306).

36 *Or.* 50.55–56: ἐδόκουν δὲ βαδίζειν ὁδόν τινα δι' ἐμαυτοῦ χωρίου προσορῶν τῷ ἀστέρι ἄρτι ἥκοντι, καὶ γὰρ εἶναι τὴν πορείαν πρὸς ἀνατολάς. παρεῖναι δὲ Πυραλλιανὸν τὸν ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ, ἄνδρα ἡμῖν τε ἑταῖρον καὶ περὶ τοὺς Πλάτωνος λόγους εὖ γεγυμνασμένον. οἷα δ' ἐν ὁδῷ καὶ ἡσυχίας οὔσης προσπαίζων αὐτὸν καὶ ἅμα ἐρεσχηλῶν εἰπεῖν, 'ἔχεις μοι πρὸς θεῶν εἰπεῖν—πάντως δ' ἐσμὲν μόνοι—τί ταῦτα ὑμεῖς οἱ περὶ τὸν Πλάτωνα ἀλαζονεύεσθε καὶ ἐκπλήττετε τοὺς ἀνθρώπους;' ἔφερεν δέ μοι τοῦτο εἰς τοὺς περὶ φύσεως αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν ὄντων λόγους. καὶ ὃς ἀκολουθεῖν με ἐκέλευε προσέχοντα τὸν νοῦν. ἐκ τούτου δὲ ὁ μὲν ἡγεῖτο, ἐγὼ δ' εἱπόμην. καὶ προσελθὼν μικρὸν ἀνασχὼν τὴν χεῖρα δείκνυσί μοι τόπον τινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ: καὶ ἅμα δεικνὺς ἔφη, 'οὗτος δή σοί ἐστιν ὃν καλεῖ Πλάτων τοῦ παντὸς ψυχήν'. ἀναβλέπω τε δὴ καὶ ὁρῶ Ἀσκληπιὸν τὸν ἐν Περγάμῳ ἐνιδρυμένον ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ …

From this dream it is clear that Aristides distinguishes himself from the Platonists, among whom, however, are many of his "comrades" (ἑταίροι), like Pyrallianus; and it is also clear that he ultimately considers Plato totally compatible with his devotion to Asclepius: according to Plato in this dream, the "soul of the Universe", in Behr's translation, or "of the Whole" (τοῦ παντὸς ψυχή) is nothing but Asclepius himself.

In order to refute the *Gorgias*, after all, Aristides uses arguments drawn from other dialogues of Plato. Laurent Pernot's formula "Plato against Plato" clearly summarizes this method.[37] Plato, in sum, is a very relevant model, side by side with the beloved Demosthenes: in many speeches Aristides adopts Socrates' "posture", and refutes his interlocutors by adopting Socratic arguments. See for instance *Or.* 33, wholly pervaded by the rhetorical scheme of the exemplum *à la* Socrates; or oration 28, which draws even its title from Plato's *Euthydemus* and is full of explicit and implicit quotations from Plato's dialogues.[38] Also the group of the prose hymns, as it has been recently pointed out by Johann Goeken, is deeply indebted with Plato.[39] In general, Aristides' approach to Plato and the Platonists is to be interpreted more as a passionate but respectful dispute, than as a conflict. The core of the polemic is very serious, but is limited to Plato's attacks on rhetoric as discipline and those who practiced it. One must not underestimate, furthermore, the fact that many from Aristides' milieu were Platonists, as is clear from the passages quoted above, and that many of them were also Asclepius' devotees, who gathered at Pergamum, and spent with Aristides long days within the sanctuary. *Or.* 4 *To Capito*, as anticipated above, clarifies how Aristides had many Platonists among his readers, and how he appreciated Plato in several respects.

Such a complex and multiple approach to Plato—so severe regarding the conception of rhetoric, so respectful as to the rest—aroused the interest of both later Platonists and rhetoricians. Of course, as was predictable, we know that Platonists continued the polemic also in the following centuries, like Porphyry, who writes a treatise against Aristides,[40] or like Olympiodorus, who polemically mentions Aristides in his philosophical commentaries.[41] This is a hint of the vitality of Aristides' fortune, in as much as only "cumbersome" works

37 Pernot (1993b). See also Milazzo (2002); Flinterman (2000–2001); Dittadi (2008; 2016).

38 Miletti (2011: 52–55).

39 Goeken (2012: 188–202) on the case of *Or.* 41 *Dyonisus*.

40 The source is Souda, β 2098. See Behr (1968b); Pernot (2006: 307–309).

41 Robert (2008: 1196–1206), in which Olympiodorus' passages against Aristides are collected. See also Lenz (1946); Behr (1968b).

deserve refutations. So Aristides was undoubtedly read in the Platonic milieu, and also the Platonist Proclus mentions a work of his, namely *Or.* 36.[42]

As for the rhetoricians, one of the causes of the Platonic Orations' success lies also in the fact that these speeches constitute an example not only of how to defend rhetoric against its detractors, but also of how to deal with Plato and the Platonists. If Late Antiquity testifies a great development of Platonism and a consequent development of the confrontation between rhetoric and Platonism,[43] then rhetoricians could find in Aristides a suitable model for a respectful but not acquiescent dialogue with such an authoritative philosophical school. Moreover, Aristides became necessary reading for all who had a "mixed" competence, i.e. both philosophical and rhetorical. If we focus, for instance, on Themistius and Synesius, two authors who are well acquainted with philosophical and rhetorical issues at the same time, and who idealized the rhetorical-philosophical model of Dion of Prusa, we find that they both deal with and refer to Aristides in more than one occasion. Themistius' *Or.* 5 to the emperor Jovian is indebted to Aristides' speech 35 (which today is generally considered pseudepigraphic, but was not in Themistius' times), while his panegyric of Valens and Valentinian (*Or.* 6) is influenced by Aristides' speeches 26, *To Rome*, and 27, *Panegyric at Cyzicus*.[44] More than a generation later, Synesius, who had been a pupil of the Platonist philosopher Hypatia of Alexandria, writes a work on the dreams which implies (albeit without explicit mention) a reading of the *Sacred Tales*.[45] In his work on Dion of Prusa, furthermore, he highly praises Aristides' *Or.* 3:

> Moreover his indictment of Plato, *On Behalf of the Four*, made Aristides famous amongst the Greeks. This essay was devoid of all finished art, nor could you give it a place in the category of rhetoric at least with any justice to rhetorical laws; but it is composed with an ineffable beauty of form and with an astonishing grace, bringing as it were, a reckless delight by its use of names and words.[46]

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42 Aristides' *Or.* 36 (*Aegyptian*) is cited by Proclus in his commentary to Plato's *Timaeus*, 37D, p. 121 Dihel. See Robert (2008: 1191).

43 See the essays collected in Fowler (2014).

44 Vanderspoel (1995: 9–15), with earlier bibliography.

45 Synesius' *De insomniis*, on which see the essays collected in Russell and Nesselrath (2014).

46 Syn., *Dio* 3.5 (transl. by A. Fitzgerald): Ἀριστείδην τε ὁ ‹πρὸς Πλάτωνα› λόγος ὑπὲρ τῶν τεσσάρων πολὺν ἐκήρυξεν ἐν τοῖς Ἕλλησιν. οὗτος μὲν καὶ τέχνης ἁπάσης ἀμοιρῶν, ὅν γε οὐδ' ἂν ἐπαγάγοις εἴδει ῥητορικῆς, οὔκουν ἐκ τοῦ δικαίου γε καὶ τῶν νόμων τῆς τέχνης· συγκείμενος

A similar case is that of the prolegomena written by Sopater, which have been transmitted together with the works of Aristides. Although the identity of this commentator is still uncertain,[47] it is clear that he is a rhetorician who also has a philosophical education. His approach to Aristides is encomiastic (see, for instance, the biographical profile in the so called *Treatise B*),[48] but is also apologetic in favour of Plato, especially in the extended prolegomena to *Or.* 3,[49] and in the hypothesis to the same speech.[50]

In the Late Antiquity, i.e. in a world dominated, on the "rhetorical" side, by the widespread diffusion of the schools, and, on the "philosophical" side, by the increasing influence of Platonism, Aristides could well be considered a model able to make the two sides communicate each other.

4 Rhetoric and Greek Identity: Vying with Demosthenes, Surpassing Isocrates

From an ideological point of view, Aristides was perceived as a perfect model of a modern and up-to-date form of Hellenism, in that he was able to write a *Panathenaicus* (*Or.* 1), full of patriotic spirit, which could compete with that of Isocrates, and at the same time to write an encomium of Rome (*Or.* 26), which indicates how a Greek rhetorician should deal with the ruling power of Rome without losing his Greek pride.[51] Although he never wrote encomia of emperors, he also shed light on how to address an emperor in the speeches connected with the earthquake of Smyrna.[52] We have several indications of this pattern. First of all, we know that the *Panathenaicus* is by far the most quoted in later sources.[53] It is also very relevant that most of the scholia to Aristides'

δ' οὖν ἀπορρήτῳ κάλλει καὶ θαυμαστῇ τινι χάριτι, εἰκῇ πως ἐπιτερπούσῃ τοῖς ὀνόμασι καὶ τοῖς ῥήμασιν.

47 He is possibly to be identified with the rhetorician Sopater of Athens. Vanderspoel (2011: 192–193), followed by Swain (2013: 17–18), conjecturally proposes to identify him with Sopater of Apamea, but the problem remains uncertain.

48 Lenz (1959: 111–119).

49 Lenz (1959: 127–151).

50 Lenz (1959: 157–166).

51 On Aristides' political conception of the relations between the Greeks and Rome, see Pernot (2008) and the essays collected in Desideri and Fontanella (2013).

52 *Ors.* 17–21. Cf. also the testimony of Philostr. *VS* 2.9.582, about Marcus Aurelius' commotion after reading *Or.* 18.

53 Robert (2008: 1166): the work is quoted 134 times by later sources until the end of the Byzantine age.

works and Sopater's *Prolegomena* focus especially on this oration, together with the Platonic *Or.* 3.[54] Menander Rhetor, furthermore, also claims that both the *Panathenaicus* and *To Rome* are to be considered excellent models for praising cities in general and/or specific aspects of a city.[55] Also in the Byzantine age the *Panathenaicus* was perceived as one among the major works of Aristides, as witnessed by Photius' *Bibliotheca*.[56]

The success of the *Panathenaicus* is less surprising if we read it as an effort to update Isocrates' homonymous speech: the times were deeply changed, and a new definition of the Athenian (and hence Hellenic) identity was needed. In Aristides' *Panathenaicus*, the positive role of Rome is considered,[57] and this fact made this speech suitable to replace, or at least integrate, the "old" *Panathenaicus*. A hint of such a competitive attitude towards Isocrates is to be found in Aristides' works themselves. It is noteworthy that Aristides is clearly influenced by Isocrates' speeches, but does not insert explicit quotations from Isocrates, and the name itself is present only once in his entire extant production.[58] Even when it is not possible to avoid a direct mention—as in the case of *Or.* 28, where Aristides is writing a history of the Hellenic literature listing all the authors who have praised themselves—, Aristides manages to omit the name of his predecessor, introducing the quotations without naming him![59]

Parallel to such a minimization of Isocrates is Aristides' exaltation of Demosthenes. If the name of Isocrates is passed under silence, the one of Demosthenes is obsessively present.[60] Since Aristides' penchant was not for political nor judicial speeches, he emulated Demosthenes above all through his style and the subjects of his declamations.[61] In the *Sacred Tales*, as also seen above, we have many testimonies of how Aristides desired to be compared to Demosthenes. In the reports of his dreams, he often sees that someone praises him as an "*alter* Demosthenes". One example will be sufficient:

> And the problem was as follows, for I remember it, since it was the first which I received: "While Alexander—he said—is in India, Demosthenes

54 Modern edition in Lenz (1959).

55 Men. Rhet. 1.349; 1.350; 1.360; 2.372; 2.384; 2.386 (*Panathenaicus*); 1.360 (*To Rome*). On Menander, see below the next subchapter.

56 Phot. *Bibl.* 246.

57 Bowersock (2013); Oudot (2016).

58 *Or.* 3.677.

59 The passage is discussed in Miletti (2011: 187), although a deeper analysis of the relation between Aristides and Isocrates is still to be written.

60 Demosthenes' reception in Aristides is analyzed in Pernot (2006).

61 Miletti (2016b).

> advises that it is time to act". I immediately accepted the omen of Demosthenes speaking again and of the subject, which was about empire.[62]

Thus, Aristides is able to let Demosthenes speak again. After all, Aristides' general purpose may well be seen as an effort to deal with Isocratic themes and situations adopting Demosthenes' style, language, and posture. This means that the latter is to be explicitly emulated, the former is to be silently eclipsed.

The association—promoted by Aristides himself—of his own name with that of Demosthenes certainly favoured Aristides' reception in Late Antiquity: the Athenian orator, as far as he was a fundamental model for the whole Second Sophistic, was at the basis of the development also of the so-called Third Sophistic, both independently from and thanks to the mediation of sophists of the second century AD like Aristides.[63] They were both authors studied at school, and the perception of the two as complementing each other was something which passed to the Byzantine period and culminated in Theodore Metochites' *synkrisis*.[64]

5 Aristides' Rhetorical Theory and Practice

From at least the third century on, Aristides enjoyed a great fortune because he was considered an excellent orator from a technical point of view. Today it is not easy to understand exactly which are the aspects of Aristides' eloquence enabling the growth of such a reputation. Even one of the more relevant biographical testimonies about Aristides, i.e. Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists*, does not help us too much.[65] Philostratus offers about a positive portrait of the orator, underlying his engagement in the reconstruction of Smyrna and his virtuous attitude, without adulation, towards the emperors. Moreover, he

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62 *Or.* 50.18: καὶ ἦν γε τὸ πρόβλημα τοιόνδε, μέμνημαι γὰρ, ἅτε καὶ πρῶτον λαβών· 'Ἀλεξάνδρου, φησὶν, ἐν Ἰνδοῖς ὄντος συμβουλεύει Δημοσθένης ἐπιθέσθαι τοῖς πράγμασιν'. εὐθὺς μὲν οὖν ἐδεξάμην τὴν φήμην τὸν Δημοσθένη τε αὖθις λέγοντα καὶ τοὺς λόγους ὄντας περὶ τῆς ἡγεμονίας.

63 On Demosthenes' fortune in Late Antiquity, see chapters 8–9 of Drerup (1923: 166–241); see also, more recently, Pernot (2006: 97–98), who also stresses how relevant was Hermogenes' role in defining Demosthenes' position as model in Late Antiquity. A fundamental step for Demosthenes' late antique reception were indeed Libanius' *Hypotheses to Demosthenes*, on which see Gibson (1999; 2008). On Libanius' imitation of Demosthenes, see also Cribiore (2013: 20–21, 97–106, 108–110).

64 An analysis in Pernot (2006: 100–115).

65 *VS* 2.9.

is a relevant source for some lost speeches, and points to some qualities of Aristides' style, also mentioning, by contrast, two or three stylistic faux pas, culled from speeches which have not survived. But, in general, Philostratus' portrait does not clearly let us understand what was at the basis of Aristides' later fortune. He adds, nevertheless, a final judgement which is very relevant for our purpose, claiming that "among the sophists, Aristides was the most expert as far as rhetorical technique and theoretical principles",[66] and such an aspect of Aristides' competence is something we will find constantly in his *Nachleben*.

Aristides was indeed considered an orator who had achieved breakthroughs in his discipline, to such an extent that he could legitimately be compared side by side with the great names of earlier periods. In browsing the later witnesses, we find some recurring (encomiastic) judgements, connected with problems of rhetorical genres, of style, and also relating to the role itself of the orator. All this can be summarized in the following points:

a) Aristides became a model for several types of encomiastic speeches, a genre which of course was not new in itself, but which developed enormously throughout the Imperial Age and hence needed new *auctores*.[67] From this point of view, the earlier and also more relevant testimony about Aristides' fortune as an innovator in this genre are the two rhetorical treatises which are conventionally attributed to Menander of Laodicea, active at the end of the third century, and which are more probably to be considered as works of two different (though contemporary each other) rhetoricians.[68] Menander testifies how Aristides had become a model for the encomia side by side with the great orators of the classical past. These treatises suggest that one must imitate Aristides when praising the cities, as seen above in the previous chapter, or when praising the gods, with reference to the prose hymns;[69] or when praising islands and peninsulas, as Aristides did in his panegyric oration to Cyzicus (*Or.* 27);[70] or in general for funeral speeches.[71] It is noteworthy that it was Aristides himself who

66 *VS* 2.9.585.24–25: τεχνικότατος δὲ σοφιστῶν ὁ Ἀριστείδης ἐγένετο καὶ πολὺς ἐν θεωρήμασι. See however Castelli (2016: 426), who shows how Philostratus' portrait of Aristides is not fully positive: "il biografo accoglie certo Aristide nell'empireo dei sofisti degni della sua attenzione, ma non esita a ridurne la portata e a prenderne le distanze".

67 The development of the epidictic rhetoric is thoroughly discussed in Pernot (1993a).

68 Russell and Wilson (1981: xxxiv–xl).

69 Men. Rhet. 1.344.

70 Men. Rhet. 1.345.

71 Men. Rhet. 2.418.

promoted his prose hymns as models. In the long proem of *Or.* 45 *To Sarapis*, he maintains that (especially his) speeches ought to take the place of poetry in celebrating the gods.[72]

b) Aristides' style and his Attic language were considered elegant, strong and well balanced, as we have seen above in Synesius' comment on the style of *Or.* 3. Aristides did not write technical treatises or handbooks, as far as we know, but his interest in touching rhetorical problems from a theoretical point of view is clear above all by the Platonic Orations, as seen above. As consequence, Aristides was perceived in later periods also as an authority on rhetorical theory, as we have seen in Philostratus' testimony, and as witnessed by the fact that, in an uncertain period—not before the third century—, an anonymous τέχνη ῥητορική was written and later attributed to Aristides.[73] Let us focus on one passage in particular of this *Ars*, in which Aristides himself is quoted as a model. This passage, which is a later insertion, is drawn *verbatim* from Aristides' *Or.* 28, which, as seen above, is among his more "conceptual" works. The passage deals with the delicate rhetorical issue of the *forms* (ἰδέαι) and with the possibility to mix them in order to balance a speech.[74] The problem is approached by Aristides in a way implying some innovations in terminology and in general perspective, innovations which influenced also Hermogenes' discussion on the same topics in his *De ideis*.[75] The fact that this passage is present in a pseudo-Aristidean work shows how Aristides, by discussing some technical rhetorical issues, was able to influence his own fortune.

c) From an ethical point of view, both during his life and after his death, Aristides was considered an exceptionally pious, sober and moderate orator and teacher of rhetoric. We have seen how Libanius' "cult" of Aristides also involved a veneration of the man, not only of the works. In the passage quoted above, Sopater claimed that Aristides was a "wise and wonderful man", "among the most famous, and much more, and very sober and superior to

72 *Or.* 45.1–13. In general, on the sophists' aim to replace the poets in their panegyric role see Pernot (1993a: 635–657).

73 Edition and French translation in Patillon (2002).

74 Aristid. *Or.* 28.120–121 = Ps. Aristid. *Ars* 1.141–143, p. 1.152–153 Patillon.

75 Discussion in Miletti (2011: 198–200). See also Patillon (2002: xv–xvii, 86–87). Hermogenes, furthermore, compares a passage from the *Sicilian Orations* of Aristides with one by Demosthenes, claiming that the former, though not better in itself, is indeed "more natural" (ἀληθινώτερον) than the latter (*Id.* 353.24–354.2).

money".[76] The fact that such a judgement contrasts the modern perception of this orator, dubbed more or less as a neurotic, is consistent with the fact that—differently from the modern scholarship—ancient critics do not consider the self-orientation of the *Sacred Tales* or the self-praise of *Or.* 28 as forms of a pathologically egocentric personality.[77]

Not unlike points a) and b), moreover, it is striking how also in this case Aristides was successful in transmitting to posterity exactly the image of himself that he wished, since, as seen above, he always strove to present himself as a moderate man, whose only aim was that of being freed from his suffering by his favourite god and of being able to devote his life solely to rhetoric. A clear statement of this is found in Aristides' *Or.* 33:

> Alone of all the Greeks whom we know, we did not engage in oratory for wealth, reputation, honor, marriage, power, or any acquisition. But since we were its true lover, we were fittingly honored by oratory. [20] To some the company of boys is sweet, to some to bath as much as possible (…) But for me oratory means everything, signifies everything.[78]

6 Conclusions

We have shortly analyzed different aspects of Aristides' works and life which may have enabled the great fortune which this author enjoyed throughout Late Antiquity and beyond.

From the whole of the cases that we have dealt with it is possible to observe how most of Aristides' posthumous fortune was encouraged by Aristides himself, and in particular by those passages in which he is very explicit about his

76 Sopater, *Treatise B* in Lenz (1959: 111). The translation of this passage is drawn from Jones (2008b: 113).

77 See e.g. Philostratus, who mentions the *Sacred Tales* as accounts of Aristides' diseases, praises this genre of works, which he dubs as ἐφημερίδες, as good teachers (ἀγαθαὶ διδάσκαλοι) for rhetorical skills (*VS* 2.9.581.29–32). On the contrary, harbingers of the modern criticism against Aristides' "egocentrism" are to be seen in Arethas' scholia to Aristides, although they are fruits more of an anti-pagan perspective—see Quattrocelli (2008: 287–293)—than of a "psychologising" one.

78 *Or.* 33.19–20: μόνοι δὲ ὧν ἴσμεν Ἑλλήνων οὐ πλούτου χάριν, οὐ δόξης, οὐ τιμῆς, οὐ γάμων, οὐ δυναστείας, οὐ προσθήκης οὐδεμιᾶς τοῖς λόγοις ἐπεχειρήσαμεν, ἀλλ' αὐτῶν ἐρασταὶ καθαρῶς καταστάντες ἐτιμήθημεν τὰ πρέποντα ὑπὸ τῶν λόγων. [20] ἄλλοις μὲν οὖν ὁμιλία παιδικῶν ἡδὺ, τοῖς δὲ ὡς πλεῖστα λούσασθαι […]. ἐμοὶ δὲ λόγοι πάσας προσηγορίας καὶ πάσας δυνάμεις ἔχουσι.

(high) self-estimation, or in which he explains and underlines his major contributions to the development of rhetoric.

Obviously, this would not have been possible if his works were not in themselves perceived as extremely fine and well written by later rhetoricians, and were considered, of course, relevant for their topics as well. Aristides focused extremely thoroughly and accurately on those themes which were destined to be fundamental also for the following centuries: the development of a new spirituality involving a more personal contact with the god(s); a re-definition of the Hellenism under the empire; a close dialectic between rhetoric and philosophy, and so on.

Aristides was indeed accurate in promoting his own image also to the following generations: in a passage of the fifth Sacred Tale, he openly claims, responding to a physician demanding him to declaim orations, that he needs to revise his written speeches, since "he also has to dialogue with posterity".[79]

Aristides was well aware that, in an epoch in which self-promotion had become a necessity for every professional rhetorician, if he wanted to became an authority for present and future audiences and readers, and to surpass other rhetoricians of the past as well as of his own times, he had to explicitly promote an image of himself adequate to his own expectations of fame, and this would enable a better reception of his works. According to his remarkable later reception, he was perfectly right.

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79 *Or*. 51.52: 'ὅτι νὴ Δί', ἔφην ἐγὼ, σπουδαιότερόν μοί ἐστιν ἐπελθεῖν τινα τῶν γεγραμμένων· δεῖ γάρ με καὶ τοῖς ὕστερον ἀνθρώποις διαλέγεσθαι'.

CHAPTER 2

Σωφροσύνη and Self-Knowledge in Methodius' *Symposium**

Ryan C. Fowler

Methodius' *Symposium* or *On Chastity* has received some scholarly attention in the last few decades, being studied through a few different approaches.[1] Musurillo's earlier (1958) translation and notes focus on Methodius' emphasis in this work on ideal and absolute virginity. Patterson's (1997) work seems to look at the *Symposium* primarily from a theological perspective as a critique of Origen. Zorzi (2003) primarily argues that ἁγνεία ("chastity") allows and accounts for all of the other Christian virtues Methodius discusses. Bril (2006), to my mind, wishes that Methodius' *Symposium* were something it is not: a possibly accurate record of a third- or fourth-century symposium. And LaValle's (2015) instructive dissertation argues that through the use of the philosophical dialogue, the symposium setting, the rhetorical set-speech, and the poetic use of hymnody, Methodius innovates as he builds on the tradition of the Second Sophistic literature that came before him.

As a contribution to this discussion, I would like to argue that one of the most productive lenses through which we might read Methodius' *Symposium* is that of Plato's use of the idea of σωφροσύνη. This is, of course, a term that is infamously difficult to translate in any era, since it incorporates a number of concepts, including "self-control", "temperance", "continence", "discretion", "moderation" (including in sensual desires), "soundness of mind", even "sanity". In this paper, I (perhaps frustratingly) leave the term untranslated, because translations of and scholarship on Methodius' *Symposium* have often been inconsistent regarding this term, or have, in some cases, argued for relatively idiosyncratic interpretations. This approach can have the unintended conse-

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1 For the standard Greek edition of Methodius' 311 AD work, see Musurillo and Debidour (1963: 42–332). The study of late antique dialogue has been revived by Cameron (2014).

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quence of affecting or obscuring the entire work through specific, seemingly intentional shifts in translation.[2]

There is no doubt that other readers have noticed the importance of σωφροσύνη in Methodius' work. In North's (1966) volume on σωφροσύνη, she argues that Methodius interpreted σωφροσύνη as "chastity", often in the physical sense.[3] Goldhill (1995) also identifies σωφροσύνη as a central term for Methodius, noting (4) "it is paradigmatically sexual continence, a control of desire, that is but a step towards the commitment to virginity". Certainly, this idea is put forth by Marcella, the first speaker in the *Symposium* (1.18; see also Goldhill [1995: 44]). I argue, however, that the idea and application of σωφροσύνη shifts dramatically through the speeches, and by the time we get to the vic-

2 Musurillo (1958) translates σωφροσύνη as: "self-discipline" (1.1.41); "continence" (1.1.63, 1.2.31, 1.3.24, 1.3.33 [where the Greek is εἰς ἐγκράτειαν … καὶ σωφροσύνην, and Musurillo has "to moderation and continence"], 1.4.2, 2.7.44, 3.11.13, 3.12.18, 6.4.6, 6.4.16, 8.1.21, 8.1.26, 8.3.14, 8.4.1, 8.3.14, 8.4.1); "prudently" (for σωφρόνως, 2.5.20, 6.2.22); "self-control" (3.10.2, 3.12.48, 9.4.50, 11.1.31, epilogue [ep.] 1.74); "chastity" (3.11.1, 3.12.28, 4.4.3, 4.6.3, ["chastely" for σωφρόνως] 5.2.22, 5.3.16, 6.5.3, 7.2.12, 12.1.106 ["chaste" for σῶφρον], ep. 1.18, ep. 1.85); "purity" (5.3.2); "temperance" (6.4.48, 8.2.5, 8.13.11, and throughout all the syllogisms in 8.6–16); "disciplined" (8.16.104 and [for σωφρονίζεται] 105); and "sobriety" (ep. 1.104). (A corresponding term seems to be missing from the Greek text at 8.3.4, and also, I think, at 3.13.1.)

Patterson gives "continence" for ἐγκράτεια (1997: 10, 69, 70 n. 7, 104) and both "continence" (1997: 117) and "moderation" (1997: 69) for σωφροσύνη.

Zorzi (2003) helpfully pins terminology to specific important terms in her discussion of Methodius' work: ἁγνεία is translated as "chastity"; παρθενία as "virginity"; σωφροσύνη as "temperance"; and ἐγκράτεια as "continence". Even then, however, when the uses of various terms seem to shift, especially between ranges of meaning for σωφροσύνη, the process of pinning down translations can itself become too rigid, especially for the specific type of dialogue Methodius' *Symposium* is.

For a discussion of the rather striking confusion due to terminological fluctuations in various studies of Methodius' work, see Zorzi (2003: 166 n. 62).

3 The examples she uses to support her argument are taken from his second and third speeches, which would—if it is true that Methodius' use of this term shifts during the course of his work—exemplify only those particular stages of the overall argument. This point seems to be tacitly supported by her acknowledgment of the shift in the definition of σωφροσύνη between Speech 2 and Speech 3. It is noteworthy, however, that she references the role of σωφροσύνη in the winning Speech 8 only in a note (North 1966: 338 n. 56) at the point in her discussion in which these references "are the most notable" because of their connection with Plato's *Phaedrus*. My sense is that she puts this important use of σωφροσύνη in a note and not in the main text because the identification of σωφροσύνη with ἁγνεία, which is made in Speech 3 and is further complicated by the time we reach Speech 8, is the bridge she uses between Methodius and Gregory of Nazianzus in her argument (North 1966: p. 339). That said, I do

torious Speech 8, this characterization no longer holds true in the same way. Further, while I agree that (1995: 43) "in Methodius σωφροσύνη is constituted as a virtue that leads the subject from an avoidance of transgression towards an ideal of self-control in virginity and the denial of the desires of the flesh", this characterization of σωφροσύνη seems to ignore the inclusion Methodius allows of different types of lives that have their own practices of this virtue, and is as a result presented in terms that are too absolute. That said, this paper relies heavily on Goldhill's notion that (1995: 4) "[t]he realignment of the care for the flesh that is characteristic of later antiquity brings with it a realignment and a new contestation of the sense of σωφροσύνη, an ideological matrix in which the novel also plays a significant role".

Patterson (1997: 69) argues that Methodius replaces ἐγκράτεια in favor of σωφροσύνη, but he also notes (1997: 69 n. 7) that Methodius habitually uses σωφροσύνη for the abandonment of sexual relations. This characterization of σωφροσύνη strikes me as too reductive. In Patterson's view, Methodius uses σωφροσύνη rather than ἐγκράτεια ("continence") as the mere abandonment of sexual relations, and ἁγνεία ("chastity") and παρθενία ("virginity") as referring to more than merely this physical abandonment. Alternatively, I would suggest that all of these terms—except for ἐγκράτεια—are reapplied by Methodius to refer to practices and senses beyond the physical, and that σωφροσύνη is in particular used to refer to much more than—but also—physical relationships.

Finally, Zorzi notes that Thecla's search for (2003: 158) "the name, the nature, the power and the fruits of σωφροσύνη recalls the discourse of Diotima (Plato, *Symp.* 201d–e; 202e)", an idea which connects the importance of understanding σωφροσύνη in Methodius to the importance of understanding the role of Eros in Plato's work of the same name. This is a connection I agree with, and will try to expand on it here. Specifically: while Zorzi finds the term ἁγνεία to encompass the others (παρθενία, σωφροσύνη, and ἐγκράτεια), I argue that, while Methodius' is certainly a dialogue about chastity (as the second title of the work suggests), it is in fact σωφροσύνη that allows for the possibility of chastity, virginity, continence, as well as marriage, remarriage, procreation, and all of the other types of lives Methodius is interested in including within the Church. In Methodius, it is σωφροσύνη itself, then, that allows for all other virtues. Perhaps similarly, Diogenes Laertius (3.60) tells us that the full title of Plato's work had become by his time *Republic* or *On Justice* (Πολιτεία ἢ περὶ δικαίου),

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agree with her emphasis on Speech 8, and work in this paper to expand the impact of the ideas about σωφροσύνη made in that speech.

where justice is nearly indistinguishable in that dialogue from his definition of σωφροσύνη (for example, 433a–b; see also *Charmides* 161b). It is, I think, a similar situation with Methodius' *Symposium*.

My argument is that, as a truly central concept throughout this work, a full investigation of σωφροσύνη in Methodius allows us to account for a number of things:

- why the ascent of the Christian soul looks in many sections of the speeches like the ascent of the soul in Plato's *Phaedrus* (see 244a–257b).
- how the progressive building of argumentation between each of the main eleven speeches in Methodius' work (including Arete's, at the end) is reflected, for example, by the development of the idea of σωφροσύνη as referring initially to a phase in human development, and then to a type of human behavior, ending with that virtue being understood as the guiding principle of the (clearly, Platonic) "chariot of our souls".
- related to the above, how and why the slow but systematic Platonizing of Methodius' expression of σωφροσύνη becomes increasingly transcendent until Methodius' Platonic and Christian worlds fuse.
- how his specific arguments against the encratism being practiced during the third and fourth centuries—as Methodius himself understands it—utilize the Platonic middle-dialogue definition of σωφροσύνη as first an internal, and then an external, "beautiful order", which is realizable through self-mastery alongside (crucially, I believe), self-knowledge.
- in what way the encratsists' mistaken understanding of the soul, which (in Methodius' mind) accounts for their hypocrisy, as well as how the instability and resulting failure of their way of life, lead inevitably to the soul's disharmony as a fall away from its virtuous state.
- and, finally, why Methodius somewhat counterintuitively argues at the end of the work that the superior Christian soul is not the one that is chaste and feels no desire, but rather the one that experiences both chastity and desire with temperance.

In the following, I focus first on a brief summary of the progression in the sympotic speeches toward final definitions of chastity through the development of the idea of σωφροσύνη; second, on Methodius' definitions of σωφροσύνη, which are based on Plato's characterization of the sophrosynic wise man; and third, on the idea that the fall from virtue in Methodius' work mirrors the devolution of the virtuous soul and political constitutions in Plato's *Republic*. This fall occurs because of a loss of σωφροσύνη; this loss, in turn, explains the character of Methodius' criticisms against the encratists, who are a main target of the work.

As a brief reminder of Methodius' speeches:[4] in Marcella's Speech 1, the role of σωφροσύνη starts as a phase of human development, where ἐγκράτεια and σωφροσύνη are identified as comprising absolute virginity; Speech 2 of Theophilia corrects this initial encratist position to include procreation, along with an emphasis on mankind's absolute free will, while suggesting, therefore, that matter is not the source of evil or sin. In Thalia's Speech 3, σωφροσύνη first shifts to include proper sorts of marital relations, primarily, I think, in order to avoid the hypocrisy that results from the practice of ἐγκράτεια alone, then shifts to the idea that though one should not despise procreation (an idea initially presented in Speech 2), one should in fact prefer ἐγκράτεια (and, in this way, Methodius begins a hierarchy of preferred lives). In Theopatra's Speech 4, ἐγκράτεια is essentially equated with virginity, but the discussion adds to this idea that σωφροσύνη is a state of harmony, and, as a result, health. So, in this first allegorically interpretative speech, we find a conservative shift to the idea of σωφροσύνη as itself homologous with virginity, which is then, in Thallusa's Speech 5, "corrected" to the idea of σωφροσύνη as the driver of the chariot of our souls (see *Phaedrus* 246a–249d) that allows us to practice virginity—but now, only "as much as possible". Importantly, Methodius does not back away from this type of qualification for the rest of the work.

At this point in the speeches, the idea of σωφροσύνη becomes an important way to avoid hypocrisy between the mere professing of virginity and what one actually does;[5] this role comes to a head in Speech 6 of Agathe, where it is shown that the one who practices φρόνησις ("prudence") and σωφροσύνη will meet God in the heavens. When, in Procilla's Speech 7, σωφροσύνη is associated with the adornment of the mind, this addition sets up σωφροσύνη as the preeminent universal guiding virtue of our souls, which allows various types of "chastity" to emerge (including procreation, marriage, and absolute virginity), so that σωφροσύνη is shown (as it is also in the *Phaedrus* [245c]) to have "given our heart wings". This echo of the wings of the *Phaedrus* helps us to recognize, in Thecla's Speech (8.3.3–4), (the Platonic Forms of) "Justice itself, Love itself, Truth and Prudence themselves" (αὐτὴν δικαιοσύνην καὶ αὐτὴν σωφροσύ-

4 It might also be helpful to point out another Platonic feature that figures prominently in Methodius' work: the speeches that make up the *Symposium* are relayed by a certain Gregorian during a visit to another character, Eubulion, in an outer dramatic framework.

5 Methodius writes that these people are "like those artists who paint with shadows, portraying a mere image of virtue instead of the truth itself" (translations for Methodius taken from Musurillo [1958], often slightly adapted). For similar idea in Plato, see *Phd.* 69b6–7 and 82a11; and *R.* 2.365c3–4, 6.500d8, and 6.518d3–519a6.

νην, ἀγάπην αὐτὴν … καὶ ἀλήθειαν καὶ φρόνησιν).[6] Thus, this speech—Thecla's prize-winning speech—completes the fusion of the Platonic intelligible world of the Forms and Christian heaven, and explains that the successful practice of σωφροσύνη involves not an absolute, but rather—crucially—an idiosyncratic restraining of our sexual desires, as well as an appropriate purity regarding our senses, our minds, and our hearts (that is, as a [8.16] "natural good in itself" [ἡ σωφροσύνη φύσει ἀγαθόν]). This proper level of purity, as discussed in the final Speeches 8, 9 (of Tusiane), and 10 (of Domnina), allows us to be closer to God, now, in this life; this last is an important qualification, since here Methodius all but ensures our being able to see and be with God after our bodies die.

By tracing the term and concept in this way, we can see how its use by Methodius emphasizes not merely an appropriate σωφροσύνη regarding our relationship with our bodies, but also the harmony between our minds and souls and our bodies. This point is essential if we want to understand how the notion of chastity is opened up to everyone (both men and women, it should be noted): Methodius' final understanding of it is as an organizing principle both within us and with others, rather than as a dismissal or denial of some part of us.[7] The dialogue form, and specifically one modeled on Plato's *Symposium*, has the virtue of being a dynamic, shifting conversation that allows Methodius to show how one might start from an opponent's premises and conclude with a better and more nuanced definition, for example, of the practice of chastity. This conversation also creates both a metaphoric noetic realm for its general audience as well as, for Christians, a literally transcendent one.

The progression, abstraction, and ascension of the development of σωφροσύνη through sequenced steps helps us understand why Methodius used Plato's

6 Continuing in this Platonic vein, Methodius described the forms in that place (ἐκεῖ) (8.3.5–7): "of which we in this world see merely ghost-like shadows as in a dream, when we think we see them come into being from the actions of men; because in this world there is no clear image of them, but only faint copies, and even these copies we often perceive only obscurely as we try to represent them to ourselves"; see Plato *Phdr*. 250b.

7 Methodius gestures ironically to this ending in the very first speech, even though that speech is a portrayal of the extreme encratist position, when the speaker identifies those for whom the treatise is meant: that is, those who have an understanding of the "heroic efforts" that are requisite if the ἔρως of σωφροσύνη is to grow in them (1.1.63–64; which is a nod, I think, to a main theme of Plato's *Symposium*). This point is answered in Thecla's winning Speech 8 (esp. 8.2), when those who remain outside the mysteries fulfill the irresistible desire of intemperance (τὴν ἀνάγκην … τῆς ἀκρασίας) and indulge in the wild pleasures of love (ἀγρίαις ἐρώτων ἡδοναῖς) instead of living a chaste life of σωφροσύνη (μετ' αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης) as procreators of children.

Symposium as his model, since each speech has within it, as we also find in Plato's version, the introduction of several rungs of a ladder that reach toward a transcendent intelligible realm: a (Platonized) Christian heaven. Each speech is meant to be an expansion of the previous speech (sometimes by correction), in which the seeds of ideas are allowed to develop.[8] It is important, however, that—by including various types of physical relationships in his speeches, as Plato in his own *Symposium*—Methodius never gives up on the physical world entirely. We should note, though, that in that latter work, Plato's emphasis on this world is as the start of the ascension of the soul toward the Form of Beauty itself (τὸ καλόν).[9] Methodius' inclusion of various worldly experiences in his final definitions of chastity—procreation, marriage, remarriage, as well as "true" virginity—is his answer to what seems to be the extreme encratist exclusion of anything but complete sexual abstention practiced through a denial of the body, as Methodius seems to understand it.

The progression Methodius articulates in these successive speeches shows that his understanding of σωφροσύνη allows his position to be less absolute and, in effect, more clearly anti-encratist. At the same time, he is able to become more inclusive of the limits of a variety of types of souls of both men and women, and the lives they are able to live. In addition, his redefined chastity presents us not only with a *scala virtutis*—or perhaps a *scala castitatis*—but also, I argue, with a hierarchy within which it is reasonable to live a number of virtuous types of lives. Whatever life we should live—and this seems most important to him—it should be in every aspect consistent and honest with regard to pronouncement and promise, word and deed. As I explain below, the type of harmony Methodius sees in his final idea of σωφροσύνη, then, not only allows for internal consistency within ourselves alongside a similarly honest relationship with the external world, but also makes it possible for anyone—that is, anyone who earnestly strives for the virtue they are capable of—to find his or her proper place in the church.

In support of these claims, I would like to emphasize what I see as Methodious' understanding of two important ideas he takes from Plato, and how they

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8 The image of the growth of seeds and plants is used often in Methodius' work; see the meadow, flower, and tree imagery in, e.g., 1.2, 2.7, 4.4, 8.3, 9.4, et al.

9 As abstract as Socrates' Diotima's language eventually becomes in her speech regarding the soul's progression toward Beauty (201d–212c), the first of the four steps to that divine sight is to love a particular beautiful person, and to have beautiful words with him (210a–b). But at the same time, if that is not enough, Alcibiades' entrance at the end of the dialogue (starting at 212d) slams us back down to earth in a number of ways, especially given his earthly, "physical," and yet still transcendent description of his relationship with Socrates (216c–223d).

relate to his main argument:[10] first, his definition of σωφροσύνη at the end of the work and how exactly he distinguishes this idea from his view of ἐγκράτεια; and, second, his understanding of what the successful individual practice of the virtue of σωφροσύνη looks like, as expressed by the short speech made by the organizer of the symposium, Arete ("Excellence") herself.

The key to both Plato's[11] and Methodius' understanding of σωφροσύνη is self-knowledge. It would be a worthwhile project to trace more fully the impact of Plato's use of σωφροσύνη in his earlier dialogues on Methodius' work.[12] But, in short, in what are often characterized as Plato's earlier dialogues, σωφροσύνη (like a number of virtues, or Virtue itself) is investigated as some form of knowledge, sometimes defined as the knowledge of what is good and bad. Plato's investigations of various virtues cover different aspects of or approaches to this more general question of knowledge. With regard to σωφροσύνη, however, its specific type of knowledge is seen by Plato as a type of self-knowledge (as in the *Charmides* and *Alcibiades* I)[13] discovered through self-examination (*Apology* 20c–24e, *Alcibiades* I). In addition, Plato seems at this time to think of self-control over our desires as comprising some part of that formula, as in the *Charmides*. (This idea of self-control has been thought to be exemplified in the so-called early dialogues when Socrates steadies himself after glimpsing inside Charmides' cloak [see 155d–e].)

In his so-called middle dialogues, as Plato complicates the (arguably) Socratic, intellectualized definitions of virtue, the combination of self-knowledge—through the process of self-examination and dialogue—and ἐγκράτεια *together* becomes the common working definition of σωφροσύνη. In these dialogues (and in particular, the *Phaedrus*, *Republic*, and *Symposium*), Plato moves to a definition of σωφροσύνη as a virtue that helps control the irrational impulses in man (that is, "lower" desires, appetites, lusts)[14] through

10 There has been quite a bit of discussion about Methodius' use of Plato as a stylistic and literary model, and some about specific echoes of Plato in Methodius, but not as much, it seems, regarding how and, in particular, why Methodius uses Platonic ideas in specific points of argumentation. Examples of the first types include Musurillo (1958: 174–175); Goldhill (1995); König (2008); Zorzi (2009).

11 That is, the Plato Methodius seemed to be most familiar with, based on his identifiable Platonic quotations; see Musurillo (1958: 247).

12 As an aside, it can be said that Xenophon's Socrates is, in general, encratic (often translated as "self-mastered"), and this basic sense of self-control is thought to be the primary definition in the fifth century for both ἐγκράτεια and σωφροσύνη; see Dorion (2007: especially 120).

13 For discussion about the Platonic authenticity of *Alcibiades* I, see Denyer (2001: 14–26).

14 See *R.* 430e: "and viewed from here it bears more likeness to a kind of concord and

the process of understanding one's own self.[15] Though Socrates is presented as self-controlled in Plato, ἐγκράτεια is not by itself a characterization of this control.[16] In fact, it is an important moment in the *Republic* when Plato's Socrates questions whether self-mastery (as "control over one's self") makes any logical sense.[17] In the end, Plato's Socrates argues that self-mastery is logical, in that dialogue as in others, but only within a larger system which includes philosophical self-examination and self-knowledge. In the *Phaedrus*, *Republic*, and *Symposium*, ἐγκράτεια is used only a handful of times,[18] and

harmony than the other virtues did … Soberness is a kind of beautiful order and a continence of certain pleasures and appetites, as they say, using the phrase 'master of himself' I know not how; and there are other similar expressions that as it were point us to the same trail". *R.* 431a: "But", said I, "the intended meaning of this way of speaking appears to me to be that the soul of a man within him has a better part and a worse part, and the expression self-mastery means the control of the worse by the naturally better part" (*Republic* translations are from Shorey [1969]).

15 This understanding is a common and pervasive aspect of Plato's dialogues (even as late as the *Laws*; see 731d–732d and 732d–734d). For the present discussion, though, see *Phdr.* 230a: "And so I dismiss these matters and accepting the customary belief about them, as I was saying just now, I investigate not these things, but myself, to know whether I am a monster more complicated and more furious than Typhon or a gentler and simpler creature, to whom a divine and quiet lot is given by nature" (*Phaedrus* translations are from Fowler [1925]).

16 In Plato's *Symposium* (Methodius' primary model), Socrates is considered to have control over himself (216d–220a, 220c–d), but the explicit characterization of ἐγκράτεια is avoided; σωφροσύνη, alternatively, is the power to control our pleasures and lusts (see 196c, as well as 196d).

17 See *R.* 430e–431a: "Now the phrase 'master of himself' is an absurdity, is it not? For he who is master of himself would also be subject to himself, and he who is subject to himself would be master. For the same person is spoken of in all these expressions".

18 See *Phaedrus* 256a, which is the sole use of ἐγκράτεια in that work: "when the better elements of the mind, which lead to a well ordered life and to philosophy, prevail, they live a life of happiness and harmony here on earth, self-controlled (ἐγκράτεια) and orderly, holding in subjection that which causes evil in the soul and giving freedom to that which makes for virtue". See *Smp.* 188a for the sole use of ἐγκράτεια in that work, i.e., the moment when the hubristic Love gains more control (ἐγκρατέστερος) of nature and wreaks havoc. And, in the *Republic*, the term is used a few times: early in the discussion of the soul, regarding the need to control the passions (390e); in an explanation of an aspect of σωφροσύνη as the control (ἐγκράτεια) over desires (430e and 431a); when the "philosophic muse" has taken control (ἐγκράτεια) of the state (499d); at the important moment when Socrates says "until the philosophic class wins control (ἐγκράτεια), there will be no cease of trouble for city" (501e); when justice (which is found to be σωφροσύνη) is given complete "domination" (ἐγκράτεια) over the whole man, and puts him in charge of the "many headed

it is never allowed to remain very long on its own: σοφία, λόγος, or even σωφροσύνη itself is always nearby.[19]

Ultimately, Plato's articulation of Socratic σωφροσύνη (to a small degree even in the dialogues thought by some to be "early", but more explicitly in the so-called middle and late works) has three principle facets: self-knowledge, the σώφρων ἔρως ("proper" or "mindful desire", that is, desiring the right things in the right way),[20] and, in fact, ἐγκράτεια (or sometimes αὐτάρκεια, "independence", "self-sufficiency").[21] None of these components on its own is sufficient for the harmony implicit in σωφροσύνη (or, at least, they would not be found without the others), and the "sophrosynic" man is described as having some combination of all three. Most important at present is the idea that ἐγκράτεια without self-knowledge can too easily become excessive: there cannot be any sense of self or context without self-knowledge, and so there cannot be harmony.[22] The singular practice of ἐγκράτεια, for Plato, is not about having a type of relationship; rather, it is about its opposite: denial.

As a result, to be a proper σώφρων ἀνήρ, according to Plato, an individual must also have self-knowledge (τὸ ἑαυτὸν γιγνώσκειν).[23] And indeed self-mastery is certainly part of that formula: the sophrosynic man must have control over his own actions and reactions. But when we begin to see the

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beast" (589a–b); and, at the moment when the state puts evil men in power and turns the city over to them thereby ruining the better sort (605b).

19 Even σωφροσύνη without right reason is virtue "without philosophy and intellect"; see *Phd.* 82a10–b3: ἣν δὴ καλοῦσι σωφροσύνην τε καὶ δικαιοσύνην, ἐξ ἔθους τε καὶ μελέτης γεγονυῖαν ἄνευ φιλοσοφίας τε καὶ νοῦ; and *R.* 10.619c8: ἔθει ἄνευ φιλοσοφίας ἀρετῆς.

20 In fact, proper love is equated with σωφροσύνη; see *Smp.* 196c: "We all agree that temperance (σωφροσύνη) is a control of pleasures and desires, while no pleasure is stronger than Love: if they are the weaker, they must be under Love's control, and he is their controller; so that Love, by controlling pleasures and desires, must be eminently temperate (ἂν σωφρονοῖ)" (*Symposium* translations are from Lamb [1925]). For further discussion of these points, see North (1966) s.v. Plato.

21 See *R.* 387d–e: "But we also say this, that such a one is most of all men sufficient unto himself for a good life and is distinguished from other men in having least need of anybody else". As per Shorey (1969), αὐτάρκης is equivalent to ἱκανὸς αὐτῷ in *Ly.* 215a; and self-sufficiency in Plato is the mark of a good man, of God, and of the universe (see *Ti.* 33d); in Aristotle, of happiness (see, e.g., *NE* 1097b); and in some of the Stoics, of the sage (see D.L. 7.127–128).

22 See the discussion of rhetoric and the recognition of different types of souls at *Phdr.* 277b–c.

23 See especially *Alc.* I 131b: "So if knowing oneself is temperance, none of these people is temperate in respect of his art" (*Alcibiades* I translations are from Lamb [1927]); but also see *Phlb.* 19c and *Ti.* 72a. For a discussion, see North (1966).

soul as comprised of a trio of sources of different desires and beliefs (the so-called tripartite soul), it becomes clear that Plato understands this wisdom not by means of self-mastery (ἐγκράτεια) of the desires (ἐπιθυμία), *per se*, but by means of the guidance of λόγος or νοῦς (or reason), aided by θυμός (the soul's spirited desires). The position of ἐγκράτεια, conceived of as this control over appetitive desires, is usurped, in Plato, by λόγος. Hence, σωφροσύνη, thought of as the harmony between the various types of normally conflicting desires and beliefs, has a place in this system, more so than ἐγκράτεια alone, which is thought of as a type of self-mastery.[24] And in the Platonic dialogues that are most important to Methodius, this relationship is clear and does not lead to the complete denial of desires, or ἀπάθεια. What seems to make more sense to Plato, and later to our Methodius, then, is the harmony of one's soul given the types of desires one inevitably possesses while embodied.[25]

This understanding of the role of Platonic self-knowledge, then, can account for: the difference between σωφροσύνη and ἐγκράτεια alone; the idea that the former can prevent inconsistency between words and deeds; and the inclusion of different abilities emerging from different souls by taking into account individualized context in a way that ἐγκράτεια alone cannot. Finally, it allows us to understand why σωφροσύνη, as harmony, is sustainable, and ἐγκράτεια alone, as denial, is not.[26]

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24 This is most easily seen when the charioteer (νοῦς) controls the two horses of "desire" and "spirit" in the *Phaedrus*.

25 In the *R.* 430e, σωφροσύνη is a state of harmony and concord between our usually conflicting pleasures and beliefs, it is a "beautiful order". Justice, in book 4 (433a), as connected to the somewhat vague genus τὸ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν (which Critias in the *Chrm.* 161b proposes as a definition of σωφροσύνη; he is unable to sustain it, because he could not distinguish the correct meaning of the phrase), is seen as the higher sense of (spiritual) division of labor in the soul, and in the state (see *R.* 433b–d, 443c–d). See as well *R.* 443d–e: "it means that a man must not suffer the principles in his soul to do each the work of some other and interfere and meddle with one another, but that he should dispose well of what in the true sense of the word is properly his own, and having first attained to self-mastery (ἄρξαντα αὐτὸν αὐτοῦ) and beautiful order within himself, and having harmonized (συναρμόσαντα) these three principles, the notes or intervals of three terms quite literally the lowest, the highest, and the mean, and all others there may be between them, and having linked and bound all three together and made of himself a unit, one man instead of many, self-controlled and in unison (σώφρονα καὶ ἡρμοσμένον) …" On the soul always being in a sense rational for Plato, but conflicted when embodied, see Gerson (2014).

26 For more on the differences between ἐγκράτεια and σωφροσύνη, especially in Plato, see North (1966).

In this way, σωφροσύνη can be considered to transcend the process of merely controlling our desires, and in turn why Methodius introduces in his own *Symposium* Plato's idea of σωφροσύνη as a guide.[27] For example, it is this sense of σωφροσύνη as a guide that explains why Plato's wings of ἔρως in the *Phaedrus*[28] become, in Methodius' Speech 8, "the wings of σωφροσύνη", which lift the soul to the supermundane region, where we see the true (Platonic) Forms of Justice, Love (as ἀγάπη), σωφροσύνη itself (!), and truth.[29] And we should note that as early as in Speech 5 in Methodius, σωφροσύνη itself[30] had taken the place of νοῦς (as λογιστικόν) in the chariot of the soul as that part of the soul that will control and guide the horses of desire (ἐπιθυμητικόν) and spiritedness (θυμοειδές).[31] The combination of these images from the *Phaedrus* will account for an important moment of Platonic σωφροσύνη in Arete's final speech, which will answer any questions, I think, about Methodius' anti-encratism. Here, however, I want to reemphasize the inclusion of procreation,

27 See *Phdr*. 237e, where judgement leads us by reason toward what is best and is in control; and "this control has the name σωφροσύνη".

28 See *Phdr*. 245c–249d; in that work, the immortal souls lacking bodies patrol all of heaven as long as their wings are in perfect condition. As in Methodius' Speech 8, these wings lift up the soul to where the gods dwell, and are nourished and grow in the presence of the Wisdom, Goodness, and Beauty of the divine; however, foulness and ugliness make the wings shrink and disappear. But in Plato, when a soul sheds its wings, it comes to earth and takes on an earthly body, which then seems to move itself. Earth-bound recent initiates into the mysteries of love are overcome when they see a bodily form that reflects true Beauty well, and their wings grow. When this soul looks upon a particular beautiful boy, it experiences the utmost joy; when separated from the boy, intense pain and longing occur, and the wings begin to harden. It becomes evident that the boy is the only source of a cure for this pain.

29 Methodius 8.1: "Thus many who enter on our way of life become weighed down and charmed by the pleasures of deceit [see LSJ s.v. πλάνη: 2. deceit, imposture; e.g., LXX Pr. 14.8, Matt. 27:64] and lose their wings; for the sinews (τῶν τόνων; sc. [I think] "of virginity") that support the nature of the wings of σωφροσύνη and keep them soaring when they tend to droop towards the corruption of the body have become instead soft and flabby". See Plato *Phdr*. 246e: "But the divine is beauty, wisdom, goodness, and all such qualities; by these then the wings of the soul are nourished and grow, but by the opposite qualities, such as vileness and evil, they are wasted away and destroyed".

30 Musurillo problematically (it seems to me) translates this use of the term as "chastity"; see 5.3: Τίς γὰρ οὐ τὰς δι' ὀμμάτων, τίς δ' οὐ τὰς δι' ὤτων, τίς δ' οὐ τὰς διὰ γεύσεως ὀσφρήσεώς τε καὶ ἀφῆς ἡδονὰς καὶ τέρψεις ἀποδέχεται, τὸν ἡνίοχον μὴ φέρων, σωφροσύνην εἴργουσαν καὶ καθαιμάσσουσαν τὸν ἵππον τῆς κακίας;

31 In Methodius' Speech 5, chastity (σωφροσύνην) is the driver that holds back her steed from sin (τῆς κακίας) with a bloody bit (see 5.3). See *Phdr*. 254e.

marriage, remarriage, and virginity as examples of chastity conceived of as purity; these moments are all underscored by Methodius, starting with the (2.7) "don't blame the matter, blame the use" argument alongside his repeated qualifications (3.11) "as much as in one's power" (κατὰκράτος; see also 3.12), (5.2) "as much as possible" (ὡς ἔνιμάλιστα), as well as other such moments in his speeches.[32]

In the short speech of the host of the *Symposium*, Arete praises the group's collective work and crowns Thecla's Speech 8 as the prizewinner. Arete's speech completes the series of speeches and provides a bookend to that portion of the *Symposium* (that is, before Thecla's hymn and the final exchange of the interlocutors in the external frame of the work). In her short summary and explication, Arete focuses primarily on consistency between word and deed.[33] For her, few who profess the importance of chastity actually are chaste; he who endeavors to restrain his body without controlling himself in other respects does not honor chastity—instead, he simply substitutes one pleasure for another. And that pleasure, we find out, becomes excessive pride (ὑπεραίρηται) when it stems from success controlling one's desires of the flesh. So, by considering them (that is, the impulses) utterly insignificant, this person in fact does not honor chastity; in fact, he dishonors chastity with his arrogance (ὑβρίζων) and pride (ὑψηλοφροσύνῃ).[34] In other words, he is the so-called timocratic man (the "second type" of soul, and government) of Plato's *Republic* (for example, 550b); that is, he is the first to fall from aristocracy as Plato conceived of it in Book 8.[35] In the next example Methodius gives of the inconsistent soul, the person who prides himself (ἐναβρύνεταί) on material wealth (χρήμασι) makes no effort to honor chastity. Similarly, in Plato's *Republic*, the so-called oligarchic man distinguishes between the rich and the poor,[36] and, in that same form of government, those who are wealthy and who value money are its guides and administra-

32 In Thecla's speech, one is able to live a (8.2) "chaste and σωφροσύνη life as procreators of children"; and those living (9.5) "virginally" with their wives (i.e., who do not enjoy them to excess) (9.4) "blossom" with σωφροσύνη.

33 Arete first praises Domnina's final speech 10, which, in a rather dense, wandering attempt, references and tries to apply important items (thematic and methodological) from all of the other nine speeches.

34 The latter is a Christian term; see BDAG s.v. ὑψηλοφροσύνη (= Danker 2000).

35 See *R.* 550b, where the spirited man "turns over the government in his soul to the intermediate principle of ambition and high spirit (τε καὶ φιλονίκῳ καὶ θυμοειδεῖ) and becomes a man haughty of soul (ὑψηλόφρων) and covetous of honor (φιλότιμος)".

36 See *R.* 550c–d, where oligarchy is the form of government "based on a property qualification … wherein the rich hold office and the poor man is excluded".

tors.[37] In effect, then, Methodius has moved in Arete's speech from the best, most virtuous type of soul (that is, so-called aristocratic) to the second and then third best types of souls as described in the *Republic*. It is these latter types of souls (and governments) that have deviated from the best type, which Plato (and, I find, Methodius) understands as a harmony of the naturally conflicting beliefs and desires within us.

Very simplistically put: in Plato's case, νοῦς, the driver of man's soul, restrains the appetitive (ἐπιθυμητικόν) desires by means of the spirited (θυμοειδές) in order to maintain harmony; this harmony, which is justice, is in effect also σωφροσύνη. For Methodius, σωφροσύνη checks our appetitive and spirited aspects, and this leads to harmony, which is, for him, also σωφροσύνη. Methodius' focus on our various bodily desires is clear and important; encratists also have this focus, but to the exclusion of all else. Thus for Methodius, because they are not good Platonists, these encratists cannot properly check their spirited drives, and, as a result, they slip into worse habits, though still perhaps in some cases remaining in complete control of their "lower" passions. Methodius' point, as I understand it, is that one cannot neglect other aspects of the soul by focusing on only one, if one's goal is to live a consistent, virtuous, Christian life. According to Arete's speech, those who have such a monomaniacal focus are men who love themselves excessively, who will look to their own virtue in spite of their neighbors. Here we might note the communal aspect of σωφροσύνη that Thecla also includes in her long polysyllogistic argument at 8.16. In that section of her speech, sophrosynic acts are good for the individual as well as for the community as a whole (τῷ κοινῷ). It is similar for Plato: in any discussion of internal σωφροσύνη (especially in the *Republic*), implications for the political and common good are never very far behind.

According to Arete, then, it is not proper to practice chastity and become defiled by evil deeds. More to the point, however, it is not proper to profess purity and σωφροσύνη (καθαρεύειν καὶ σωφρονεῖν, 11) and then become polluted by sin; nor is it proper to say we are not concerned with the things of this world, but try to possess them all, and then remain anxious about them (as Thecla

37 See *R.* 550e: "And so, as time goes on, and they advance in the pursuit of wealth, the more they hold that in honor the less they honor virtue. May not the opposition of wealth and virtue be conceived as if each lay in the scale of a balance inclining opposite ways?" See also *R.* 551a: "And that which men at any time honor they practice, and what is not honored is neglected". The slip between the timocratic man and the oligarchic is described in Plato at *R.* 551a: "Thus, finally, from being lovers of victory and lovers of honor they become lovers of gain-getting and of money, and they commend and admire the rich man and put him in office but despise the man who is poor".

tells us in Speech 8, and as Arete reiterates in her speech). In other words, to fall away from purity is certainly bad enough.[38] Worst though is to keep all of these senses and parts pure, and then, as Arete says, not to keep one's heart pure, allowing it instead to consort with anger and conceit (τύφῳ καὶ θυμῷ). Here we should note that in Plato's vocabulary, excessive θυμός comes from the spirited part of the soul, when that source of desires in us (the θυμοειδές) is allowed to remain unchecked by reason, or νοῦς.[39] For Methodius as well, θυμός also grows excessively when pride is unchecked (due to an absence of σωφροσύνη), and we become, as a result, no longer in balance, within ourselves or by extension within the community as a whole.[40] This might be, then, what leads to the hypocrisy between words and deeds that so worries Arete in her speech; that is, the way in which (11) "many who thought that chastity consisted in the repression of sexual desires [ἐπιθυμίας is a meaningful word in Plato[41]]

38 What seems worse, for Arete, is to profess purity and then act in the opposite way. We must then watch all our senses, not only our sexual organs, but also the tongue, sight, ears, hands (see 11.1.29–41).

39 I.e., as Thracians, Scythians and the people of 'northern regions'. See LSJ s.v. θυμός: "A.II.3: spirit, courage; so in Philos., opp. λόγος, ἐπιθυμία, ib. 440b", along with *Cra.* 419e: "And θυμός has its name from the raging (θύσις) and boiling of the soul", and *R.* 411c: "On the other hand, if a man toils hard at gymnastics and eats right lustily and holds no truck with music and philosophy, does he not at first get very fit and full of pride and high spirit (θυμοῦ) and become more brave and bold than he was?" On this idea, see *R.* 571d–572a: "But when, I suppose, a man's condition is healthy and sober (σωφρόνως), and he goes to sleep after arousing his rational part and entertaining it with fair words and thoughts, and attaining to clear self-consciousness, while he has neither starved nor indulged to repletion his appetitive part, so that it may be lulled to sleep and not disturb the better part by its pleasure or pain, but may suffer that in isolated purity to examine and reach out towards and apprehend some of the things unknown to it, past, present or future and when he has in like manner tamed his passionate part, and does not after a quarrel fall asleep with anger still awake within him (κεκινημένῳ τῷ θυμῷ), but if he has thus quieted the two elements in his soul and quickened the third, in which reason resides, and so goes to his rest, you are aware that in such case he is most likely to apprehend truth, and the visions of his dreams are least likely to be lawless".

40 Note that, if this argument holds, σωφροσύνη for Methodius, when properly practiced, disallows our becoming hubristic not only because of our success in practicing various forms of chastity, but also, in what looks like a circular argument, because of our success in the very act of practicing σωφροσύνη (as is arguably also the case in Plato's *Republic*).

41 Ἐπιθυμία in Plato is desire (see *Cra.* 419c), especially sexual desire (see *Phd.* 82c; *Phdr.* 232b and 238e: "But he who is ruled by desire [τῷ δὴ ὑπὸ ἐπιθυμίας ἀρχομένῳ] and is a slave to pleasure will inevitably desire to make his beloved as pleasing to himself as possible"). Ἐπιθυμίαι are directly connected to the appetitive "part" of the soul (*R.* 439d): "Not

to the neglect of other impulses and have brought reproach upon those who tried to pursue it as they should". The latter—those who pursue chastity as they should—are those who understand their own, proper type of "chastity" through the self-knowledge that, as argued above, makes up an important part of σωφροσύνη. Arete implies that the 10 previous speeches that make up Methodius' *Symposium* have refuted these improper types, and also that the women present in the meal, as examples of (ideal) virgins, (11) "are exemplary in all things, practicing virginity in deed as well as word".

In short, Methodius, through Thecla and Arete, seems to suggest that the encratists' primary problem is that they are not Platonic enough: rather, they have not learned that it is insufficient simply to deny passions. Instead, he argues that it is better to acknowledge our passions, and harmonize them, which is an organizational position, one that is not conflict-driven. In this way, then, we see why ἐγκράτεια is not sustainable since it is based on white-knuckled denial. Alternatively, the practice of σωφροσύνη is sustainable as an organizational principle, because it is supported by self-knowledge and "right desire" of virtue.[42]

We can now understand why the counterintuitive conclusion resulting from the elenctic discussion contained in the external dramatic frame (that is, between Eubulion and Gregorion, the characters who are relating and discussing the events of the symposium) can also be true. Why, they ask, would it not be better to be chaste and without passion, instead of passionate and chaste? (In fact, we might imagine that it would also be much easier.) Part of Methodius' answer surely includes the idea of being tested by temptation and proving oneself capable.[43] We should, I imagine, think of Socrates and

unreasonably", said I, "shall we claim that they are two and different from one another, naming that in the soul whereby it reckons and reasons the rational (λογιστικόν) and that with which it loves, hungers, thirsts, and feels the flutter and titillation of other desires (περὶ τὰς ἄλλας ἐπιθυμίας), the irrational and appetitive (ἀλόγιστόν τε καὶ ἐπιθυμητικόν)—companion of various repletions and pleasures". Also *R.* 580d–e: "But the third part, owing to its manifold forms, we could not easily designate by any one distinctive name, but gave it the name of its chief and strongest element; for we called it the appetitive part (ἐπιθυμητικὸν) because of the intensity of its appetites (διὰ σφοδρότητα τῶν τε περὶ τὴν ἐδωδὴν ἐπιθυμιῶν) concerned with food and drink and love and their accompaniments, and likewise the money-loving part, because money is the chief instrument for the gratification of such desires". Note, then, this connection between the appetitive and desire for money alongside Arete's speech.

42 After all, evil (τὸ κακὸν) for Arete is not as much opposed to the "not good" (τῷ μὴ ἀγαθῷ), as to the Form of the Good (τῷ ὄντι τῷ ἀγαθῷ); see 11.1.46–49.

43 See *ep.*1, where one who has sailed on rough seas (of the passions) is more trustworthy

Alcibiades from the *Symposium* (216c–223d);[44] also the Christian parallels seem obvious: Luke 4:13, 1 Corinthians 10:13, not to mention the 40 days in the desert (for example, Mark 1:13).

At the same time, however, the argument that it is better to be without passion (ἀπάθεια) and to live chastely is the position held by those against whom Methodius is arguing in this work, and this position has been shown to result in the denial, or radical de-emphasis, of the body. In effect, we only need to look at Plato again to realize why Methodius *must* hold this position. In Plato, specifically in the *Phaedrus*, we are only truly ἀπάθεια when we are yet to be born; after birth, we experience the desires that result from embodiment.[45] If we are going to be embodied, then, it is a simple fact that we will have the temptations of pride and desire, among others. Methodius' answer is not to deny these impulses, but instead to harmonize them; otherwise, it would follow that it would be better not to be born at all.[46] What Methodius seems

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than one who has only sailed on smooth seas, since he "has steered his ship, the body, courageously into the harbor of σωφροσύνη". Regarding Methodius' final argument about desire and chastity, however, I can't help but imagine that he finds some inspiration in the individual in the *Republic* who is caught and punished, but who then rights himself, and is considered stronger for doing so; see *R.* 591b.

44 *Smp.* 216d: "Observe how Socrates is amorously inclined to handsome persons; with these he is always busy and enraptured. Again, he is utterly stupid and ignorant, as he affects. Is not this like a Silenus? Exactly. It is an outward casing he wears, similarly to the sculptured Silenus. But if you opened his inside, you cannot imagine how full he is, good cup-companions, of sobriety (σωφροσύνη)". See also Socrates' prayer for σωφροσύνη at the end of the *Phdr.* 279b–c: "O beloved Pan and all ye other gods of this place, grant to me that I be made beautiful in my soul within, and that all external possessions be in harmony with my inner man. And may I have such wealth as only the self-restrained man can bear or endure (τὸ δὲ χρυσοῦ πλῆθος εἴη μοι ὅσον μήτε φέρειν μήτε ἄγειν δύναιτο ἄλλος ἢ ὁ σώφρων)". Σωφροσύνη as extended into the idea of physical restraint is as applicable to Socrates in the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus* as it is in Methodius; what I want to suggest here is that in Methodius' *Symposium* there has been an extension of the role of σωφροσύνη, as much as a broadening of the idea of chastity.

45 *Phdr.* 250b–c: "But at that former time they saw beauty shining in brightness, when, with a blessed company—we following in the train of Zeus, and others in that of some other god—they saw the blessed sight and vision and were initiated into that which is rightly called the most blessed of mysteries, which we celebrated in a state of perfection, when we were without experience (ἀπαθεῖς) of the evils which awaited us in the time to come, being permitted as initiates to the sight of perfect and simple and calm and happy apparitions, which we saw in the pure light, being ourselves pure and not entombed in this which we carry about with us and call the body, in which we are imprisoned like an oyster in its shell".

46 This is an older Greek idea that is perhaps too much for Methodius to allow for; e.g.

to be suggesting is that we should use our bodies prudently and, as it were, "sophrosynistically". In this way, he shows us that we can be closer to God while embodied. For Methodius, this is how we are able to imitate Jesus, whom he calls the "Archvirgin" (cf. ἀρχιπάρθενος; see 1.5, 10.3, 10.5): by living temperately and harmoniously *with* temptation, and, as it were, Platonically.[47]

Theognis 1.425–428 and Silenus in Aristotle quoted in Plutarch *Consolation to Apollonius* 27, et al.

47 As a final note, it would be helpful to know if the more extreme encratists are only Methodius' target in his *Symposium* in a rhetorical sense, or if he meant also to convince them to adopt a different position.

CHAPTER 3

Rhétorique et argumentation dans l'Apologétique latine de la période constantinienne

*Guadalupe Lopetegui Semperena**

1 Introduction

Dans ce travail, nous nous proposons d'analyser les procédés argumentatifs utilisés par deux apologistes latins de l'époque constantinienne : Arnobe et Firmicus Maternus. Ladite analyse répond, en dernier ressort, à un objectif bien plus important : étudier les stratégies argumentatives utilisées dans des textes polémiques de l'Antiquité tardive, et montrer de cette façon la continuité de la dimension pragmatique qui caractérisa l'art rhétorique depuis ses origines et pendant les périodes de plus grande splendeur. Comme l'a fait observer Van Dijk, l'ancienne Rhétorique peut être considérée comme une discipline comparable à la Pragmatique moderne : le discours rhétorique, tel qu'il fut conçu et décrit par les théoriciens de l'Antiquité, est un élément textuel qui s'inscrit dans un acte communicatif où trois dimensions pragmatiques interagissent : le locutionnaire, l'illocutionnaire et le perlocutionnaire.[1] Cette conception du discours, comme acte de parole dont la forme textuelle reflète les aspects cités ci-dessus, est perceptible pendant les périodes de plus grande splendeur de la Rhétorique politique aussi bien en Grèce qu'à Rome. Par ailleurs, il n'est pas besoin d'insister sur la conversion de l'art rhétorique dans une discipline essentiellement littéraire à l'époque romaine impériale en raison des changements politico-sociaux survenus.[2] De cette façon, le caractère rhétorique de la littéra-

* Je veux remercier Nadia Brouardelle, professeur de l'Université du Pais Basque, pour avoir traduit et corrigé mon texte.

1 Comme l'a dit Austin dans une œuvre déjà emblématique (1962), quand nous parlons, nous produisons des discours qui ne sont pas de pures paroles mais des actions qui peuvent générer d'autres discours et d'autres actions … Abondant dans le même sens, Van Dijk, entre autres, a souligné la dimension pragmatique de l'ancienne Rhétorique (1972 : 25) : « (…) the body of instructions given served … not only an internal goal but above all the external conditions of affectiveness on the public. In this respect rhetoric is not only a theory of texts but also a pragmatics *avant la lettre* ».

2 Dans presque toutes les Histoires de la Rhétorique antique on remarque l'évolution de cette

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ture impériale se rapporte habituellement à la présence, dans les textes, de très nombreuses préciosités formelles et d'éléments déclamatoires. La réduction de la rhétorique aux procédés élocutifs est, en plus, un processus qui s'accentue dans la mesure où la rhétorique s'éloigne du forum et du débat politique. Cependant, cela ne signifie pas que la rhétorique perdît sa fonction sociale et qu'elle fut reléguée aux milieux scolaires. Bien qu'elle cessât d'être un instrument efficace sur la scène politique, elle continua à exercer un rôle social et même politique très important. La littérature la plus récente a souligné que les écoles de déclamation tant de fois critiquées à cause des contenus enseignés, étaient des milieux intellectuels où on pouvait débattre des questions politiques et sociales.[3] D'un autre côté, on ne peut pas oublier le rôle exercé par la rhétorique de l'éloge comme instrument idéologique et politique ni son utilisation par les écrivains chrétiens (Quiroga 2013b). En définitive, la nature pragmatique de cette discipline demeure vivante pendant la période impériale et se manifeste tout spécialement dans un type d'œuvres littéraires étroitement liées au domaine idéo-culturel : la littérature à caractère polémique. Par conséquent, nous nous sommes proposés d'aborder sous cette perspective la littérature apologétique et d'analyser, dans certaines de ses manifestations, les stratégies argumentatives développées. En effet, parmi toutes les *partes orationis*, la *argumentatio* nous semble la plus indiquée pour démontrer la dimension pragmatique mentionnée ci-dessus.[4] Certes, la littérature polémique nous fournit un riche éventail de textes argumentatifs. Depuis qu'Aristote a associé la Rhétorique à la Dialectique et qu'il les a considérées comme des techniques adéquates pour agir sur l'interlocuteur et parvenir à son adhésion par le biais du raisonnement persuasif, les deux disciplines ont constitué la base du débat, de l'herméneutique et de la création discursive-textuelle. Toutefois, la réduction

discipline dans le sens mentionné (e.g. Kennedy 1983 ; Porter 1997 ; Pernot 2000 ; López Eire 2002).

3 Migliario (2008 : 77) a affirmé à propos des écoles de déclamation : « Anzi, proprio la riflessione e la discusione sui temi e sugli argomenti oggetto della rielaborazione retorica dovenano giocare un ruolo variamente condizionante nella formazione della pubblica opinione, le cui tendenze ed espressioni trovavano nelle aule di declamazione l'occasione e le condizioni ideali per formarsi e consolidarsi ». Sur ce sujet, vid. Migliario (2007 : 11–31) ; Berti (2007 : 219–247).

4 De même López Eire a souligné (2008 : 76) : « la argumentación (…) nos sirve de ejemplo del hecho de que la palabra hay que entenderla siempre como una acción, una acción más que se realiza de forma interactiva y que genera acciones porque las palabras y los hechos están inextricablemente enlazados en el desenvolvimiento de nuestra vida de animales político-sociales que somos los humanos. »

de la Dialectique au domaine logique-philosophique transforme la Rhétorique en la discipline discursive par excellence. Le caractère systématique et diversiforme de sa normative se distingue par l'amalgame d'éléments linguistico-textuels, contextuels et pragmatiques, plus ou moins appréciables en fonction de la nature des textes et des situations communicatives qui en ont découlé. Cette interdépendance entre Dialectique et Rhétorique est un fait incontestable dans les sources théoriques anciennes. Cependant, l'identification et le lien progressif de cette dernière avec l'*elocutio* aboutit à la séparation irréversible entre la Dialectique et la Rhétorique tout en favorisant la dégradation et sous-estimation de la Rhétorique au cours des siècles.

Il est vrai qu'à partir du XXème siècle, la Théorie de l'Argumentation comme discipline indépendante liée au débat dialectique et au raisonnement logique, a connu une évolution extraordinaire. Cependant, certains de ses théoriciens les plus représentatifs affirment qu'il est insuffisant de limiter les termes du bon raisonnement à l'étude de la correction déductive des arguments. La plupart d'entre eux reconnaît que dans l'analyse d'un texte argumentatif, tous les éléments constitutifs de l'acte de communication[5] devraient être pris en compte. D'ailleurs, pratiquement toutes les théories actuelles de l'Argumentation essaient de donner une vision qui dépasse les perspectives formelles et logiques (Leff 2000 ; Carrascal 2008 : 86 ; Van Eemeren 2010). En définitive, les théoriciens actuels de l'Argumentation estiment qu'il est indispensable d'apprécier l'aspect rhétorique et pragmatique de tout discours. En réalité, ils plaident pour chercher la connexion entre Dialectique et Rhétorique, connexion que les rhéteurs de l'Antiquité avaient déjà établie.

D'un autre côté, en tenant compte de l'influence décisive de la Rhétorique dans le domaine littéraire, il semble raisonnable d'établir un lien entre les trois *genera orationis* et les types discursifs utilisés dans des œuvres définies comme apologétiques qui abondèrent durant la période tardive. Comme le souligne Fredouille, bien que de telles œuvres n'apparurent pas *ex nihilo*, elles n'eurent pas à leur disposition des modèles littéraires ni de normative générique référentielle (1995 : 202) : « le cadre référentiel le plus proche des préoccupations et des besoins des premiers apologistes était naturellement le discours judiciaire de la défense ». Laissant de côté pour le moment la considération générique des œuvres apologétiques, il est possible d'affirmer que les types discursifs propres de la littérature polémique ont, en général, un caractère argumentatif et peuvent répondre aux modèles rhétoriques offerts par le discours judiciaire

5 Van Eemeren, l'un des représentants les plus qualifiés de l'école pragma-dialectique hollandaise, illustre la tendance mentionnée dans l'un de ses derniers travaux (2010).

et délibératif. Dans ces textes, le caractère dialectique est évident car la formulation de jugements opposés engendre une tension qui se matérialise dans l'approche et le développement de la controverse. Ceci apparaît, par exemple, dans le traité arnobien où, comme nous allons le voir, le caractère dialectique conditionne intérieurement la forme du discours.

Depuis ces suppositions, l'étude de l'argumentation dans les œuvres d'Arnobe et Firmicus Maternus prétend notamment :

– Identifier les stratégies et les ressources rhétoriques et dialectiques utilisées et montrer leur effectivité pour la réalisation des objectifs fixés.
– Montrer la pertinence de ladite analyse pour évaluer de façon adéquate d'autres questions liées à la composition et à la réception des œuvres analysées.
– Prouver la pérennité de la dimension pragmatique de la normative rhétorique dans le débat idéologique mené par des intellectuels chrétiens et païens de la période constantinienne.

Par le biais de l'analyse des stratégies rhétoriques nous avons essayé d'examiner d'une façon plus satisfaisante quelques textes apologétiques tardo-antiques étant donné que l'interprétation des sources littéraires (Lim 2012 : 497) « requires first the careful interpretation of textual strategies and deployment of forms of representation as historical acts. Here the historian would do well to take the 'rhetorical turn' in order to grasp, through reading the surviving texts closely and contextually, the ideological claims put forward by those who where seeking to shape their worlds in accordance with their own beliefs and interests ».

2 Les apologistes latins de la période constantinienne

Comme l'a évoqué il y a peu Lagouanère (2014 : 36), le concept de « genre littéraire » constitue « une notion plastique et polymorphe qui varie en fonction du cadre communicationnel et pragmatique envisagé ». Dans ce sens, bien que l'apologie soit normalement considérée comme une forme littéraire inscrite dans une tradition ancienne développée par la littérature chrétienne et présente postérieurement dans les littératures modernes, elle ne peut être définie comme genre littéraire. Afin de justifier cette idée Torres (2013 : 138) souligne que les écrits inclus sous cette dénomination adoptent diverses formes littéraires tels que le dialogue, le discours, le traité, l'épître, etc. Le point commun de cette variété de formes est, principalement, la finalité de défendre une

croyance et la liberté de la pratiquer, tout comme de réfuter les accusations des contraires. Quoiqu'il en soit, en abordant la floraison et l'évolution de la production apologétique chrétienne, il convient de considérer conjointement l'interaction d'au moins trois aspects: la perspective adoptée par l'auteur, le type de récepteurs auxquels les œuvres sont principalement dirigées et le contexte politico-idéologique et religieux dans lequel elles ont été composées. Fredouille (1995: 202) a énuméré toute une série de traits communs à l'abondante production apologétique des premiers siècles: dans une certaine mesure, ces œuvres contiennent une réfutation des accusations païennes, une plainte de l'injustice desdites accusations, une polémique anti-idolâtre et une exposition doctrinale du christianisme. Bien au-delà de toute considération littéraire, il faut prendre en compte dans un premier temps, qu'un fait historique comme la promulgation de l'Édit de Milan (313) transforma le *status* juridique des chrétiens et parallèlement, l'interdépendance entre le paradigme culturel païen et le paradigme chrétien. Le premier qui, jusqu'à cette époque-là, soutenait idéologiquement le cadre institutionnel et politique, devint un paradigme culturel critiqué et poursuivi. Néanmoins, le changement du cadre politique n'entraîna pas l'affaiblissement du paradigme païen. En fait, sa continuation explique la présence récurrente d'écrits apologétiques chrétiens au-delà du vème siècle, bien des décades après la promulgation de l'Édit de Milan. A partir de ce fait décisif, on a habituellement distingué deux étapes dans l'évolution de la production apologétique. Cependant, il nous semble pertinent, comme le font Fredouille (1995: 206–207) et Lagouanère (2014: 38), de différencier plutôt trois étapes en tenant compte du caractère transitionnel et diversiforme des œuvres élaborées pendant la période constantinienne: l'apologétique pré-constantinienne (I–IIIème siècles), l'apologétique constantinienne (fin du IIIème-début du IVème siècle) et l'apologétique post-constantinienne (IV–vème siècles). Pendant la première étape, ni les auteurs grecs (Justine, Aténagore, Clément d'Alexandrie) ni les latins (Tertullien, Minucius Felix) n'utilisent la dénomination «apologie»[6] pour faire référence à leurs écrits apologétiques; ils attribuent plutôt leurs discours à l'un des *genera orationis* conformés par l'art rhétorique. En outre, ils les encadrent même dans les écrits codifiés par le cadre institutionnel (Fredouille 1995: 203). A l'époque

6 Pour ce qui est de l'*Apologeticum* de Tertullien, le titre pourrait faire croire que son auteur a utilisé consciemment le concept 'apologie' mais la réalité n'est pas aussi simple: le mot latin ne se trouve pas dans les œuvres de Tertullien ni dans son *Apologeticum* où il fait référence à son œuvre avec l'expression *tacitae litterae* (*Apologeticum* 1,1: *liceat veritati vel occulta via tacitarum litterarum ad aures vestras pervenire*).

constantinienne on trouve déjà une réflexion autour de la production apologétique préalable dans les œuvres d'Eusèbe de Césarée et de Lactance.[7] Ce dernier crée la notion d' « apologétique » en se basant sur les caractéristiques de l'*Apologeticum* de Tertullien, l'*Octavius* de Minucius et l'*Ad Demetrianum* de Ciprien. A partir d'un critère sémantico-fonctionnel, Lactance souligne le caractère réfutatif et défensif de ces œuvres tout en reconnaissant également le contenu doctrinal de ses *Institutiones*. Après les édits de Milan (313) et de Thessalonique (380) l'apologétique chrétienne, qui était « apologie » ou défense, devient *categoria* (Kahlos 2009 : 79) : il devient donc plus nécessaire d'attaquer la culture païenne que de défendre les croyances chrétiennes. En revenant à Fredouille (1995 : 207 ss.), dans la production de cette étape on peut distinguer plusieurs types d'œuvres. Dans un premier groupe il faudrait inclure les *libri contra gentes* tels que l'*Adversus nationes* d'Arnobe ou le *De errore profanarum religionum* de Firmicus Maternus. Un second groupe serait constitué par des œuvres qui sont dirigées contre une personnalité ou une œuvre concrète. Enfin, dans un troisième groupe, on inclurait les œuvres où l'on constate l'utilisation ou actualisation dans un cadre apologétique de genres littéraires classiques, tout spécialement l'historiographie ou la poésie (*Contre Simaque* de Prudence, l'*Histoire Ecclésiastique* d'Eusèbe de Césarée, les *Histoires* d'Orose ou la *Citté de Dieu* d'Augustin). La création des étapes et des sous-groupes cités à l'intérieur de la production apologétique montre que sous l'épigraphe « apologétique » s'incluent des genres littéraires et rhétoriques formellement diversiformes qui, cependant, partagent une même finalité.

Notre intention, dans les lignes qui suivent, est de souligner la spécificité de chacune des œuvres analysées, de nuancer les hypothèses observées autour de la composition et leur finalité, tout comme de mettre en relief la place qu'elles occupent dans l'évolution du genre apologétique.

3 Le livre I de l'*Adversus nationes* d'Arnobe : une large *retorsio* dialectique-rhétorique

Nous disposons de très peu de données fiables sur la vie d'Arnobe. A partir de l'esquisse biographique de Jerôme (*De uir. Ill.*, 79–80) il est d'ores et déjà

7 Eusèbe de Césarée dans son *Historia Ecclesiastica* II.2.4 et III.33.3 cite des passages de l'*Apologeticum* de Tertullien. Il en va de même pour Lactance dans ses *Institutiones Divinae* V.4.3 : *quamquam Tertullianus eandem causam plene peroraverit in eo libro cui Apologetico nomen est, tamen quoniam aliud est accusantibus respondere, quod in defensione aut negatione sola positum est, aliud instituere, quod nos facimus.*

constaté qu'à l'époque de Dioclétien il exerça les fonctions de professeur de rhétorique à Sicca et que Lactance compta parmi ses disciples. Il affirme également que pendant longtemps Arnobe combattit le christianisme jusqu'à ce que, averti dans un rêve prémonitoire, il se convertit à la nouvelle religion.[8] Quant à la datation de son œuvre *Adversus nationes*, on a spéculé autour de différentes dates à partir des données contradictoires apportées par les sources citées ci-dessus et des conclusions autour du caractère inachevé de l'œuvre.[9] Le Bonniec (1982 : 34) conclut avec prudence qu'Arnobe aurait commencé à écrire l'œuvre vers 297. Il en aurait composé la plus grande partie vers 300 et il l'aurait finie avant l'Édit de 311. La rédaction aurait été interrompue, en outre, par la mort de l'auteur.

Il est coutume de qualifier le traité arnobien d'œuvre apologétique surtout pour la nature et le contenu des deux premiers livres. Les cinq écrits suivants constituent plutôt une attaque virulente contre le paganisme et les traditions religieuses romaines et orientales (Champeaux 2007 : VII). Si nous partons des étapes indiquées par Fredouille, étapes que nous avons rappelées ci-dessus, l'*Adversus nationes* présente des traits propres aux œuvres appartenant à la période constantinienne (fin du III–débuts du IV). Cependant, il présente aussi des caractéristiques de la période suivante. Les œuvres apologétiques de la période constantinienne se caractérisent par le fait de présenter un contenu réfutatif et défensif : ce sont, au sens propre du terme, des apologies du christianisme. Dans les œuvres postérieures à l'Édit de Milan, prévaut, comme nous l'avons déjà indiqué, l'attaque contre la culture et la religiosité païennes. Cependant, le traité arnobien pourrait se situer à cheval sur les deux périodes. Si nous acceptons l'hypothèse qui repose sur le fait que l'œuvre ne fut pas composée pendant une seule période,[10] il semble congruent de proposer, tel que le font quelques savants, que les deux premiers livres dont le caractère

8 *De uir. Ill.* 79–80 : *Qui cum Siccae ad declamandum iuuenes erudiret et adhuc ethnicus ad credulitatem somniis compelleretur neque ab episcopo impetraret aduersus fidem quam semper impugnauerat, elucubrauit aduersus pristinam religionem luculentissimos libros et tandem uelut quibusdam obsidibus pietatis foedus impetrauit.*

9 Dans l'introduction à son édition, très complète et documentée, Le Bonniec cite les renseignements contradictoires que Jérôme offre dans sa *Chronique* (il en donne une date précise de composition : fin du 326 ou début du 327) et le *De viris illustribus* qui situe *l'Adversus nationes* sous le règne de Dioclétien.

10 Le Bonniec (1982 : 24–29) examine les hypothèses de plusieurs savants quant à la rédaction et publication des sept livres. Colombo (1930 : 4) défend une composition « en deux moments » : dans un premier temps, Arnobe aurait écrit le livre I qui est en lui-même « un discorso apologetico pieno ed essaurito nel disegno e nello sviluppo ». Puis, il aurait entrepris une nouvelle défense du christianisme et l'aurait rattachée à la première partie. Le

unitaire et apologétique a été largement reconnu, furent composés à l'époque de Dioclétien tandis que les cinq autres, où l'attaque à la religiosité païenne s'impose, pourraient avoir été rédigés postérieurement.

Considéré dans son ensemble, le traité a été poursuivi à partir de l'appréciation jerônimienne et des interprétations suggérées par cette dernière, pour être une œuvre confuse et prolixe (*Ep.* 58) : *Arnobius inaequalis et nimius est, et absque operis sui partitione confusus*. En suivant l'interprétation de Le Bonniec et de Monceaux sur ce point, nous croyons que Jérôme se montre négatif par rapport au style, à l'exception de la structure générale de l'œuvre.[11] Champeaux (2007 : XII–XIII) remarque également, dans le prologue de son édition du livre III, la cohésion de la structure interne du traité entre le développement et la structure des contenus. Dans ce sens, notre analyse de l'argumentation propose, parmi d'autres objectifs, de ratifier l'habileté rhétorique de l'auteur dans la conception de la macrostructure de son œuvre et de corroborer l'organisation interne bipartite que Le Bonniec et Champeau revendiquent pour l'ensemble des sept livres.

Toujours par rapport à la structure de l'œuvre, les éditeurs et spécialistes du traité sont d'accord sur un point : les livres I et II composent une unité et constituent une véritable apologie du christianisme face aux livres restants où l'attaque au paganisme s'impose. En outre, la nature et la composition du livre II ont entraîné des opinions opposées. Son contenu philosophique, sa longueur, et le fait que l'auteur lui-même l'appelle au début du livre III « digression »,[12] permettent de le considérer comme un *excursus* qui complète l'apologie du livre I. Son caractère autonome a même induit certains spécialistes à affirmer un processus de rédaction indépendante et une insertion postérieure dans l'ensemble des livres restants. Il n'y a aucun doute que conceptuellement, les livres III–VII forment un ensemble et que le livre I constitue lui-même une unité autonome, une apologie dans le sens strict du terme.[13]

Par conséquent, en tenant compte du caractère autonome et véritablement apologétique du livre I face aux livres restants, tout comme des controverses

livre II, aurait été incorporé plus tard à l'ensemble. Monceaux, parmi tant d'autres, considèrent qu'Arnobe aurait écrit les deux premiers livres peu de temps après sa conversion et postérieurement, les livres suivants (1982 : 25–28).

11 Le participe *confusus* se rapporterait au style mais l'appréciation de la structure générale serait positive (*absque operis sui partitione*).

12 *Ad. Nat.* III, 2, 1 : *Nunc ad ordinem reuertamur a quo sumus necesario paulo ante digressi, ne diutius interrupta defensio palmam criminis comprobati calumniatoribus concessisse dicatur.*

13 Vid. n. 10.

suscitées par le livre II, nous allons nous concentrer, dans les lignes qui suivent, sur l'argumentation dans le livre I.

3.1 *Les procédés argumentatifs dans le livre I de l'* Adversus nationes

On peut considérer le traité arnobien comme un vaste discours de réfutation où se trouvent de constantes interpellations à un interlocuteur fictif. Comme nous le verrons un peu plus loin, la tension dialectique inhérente à la *retorsio* se reflète au cours dudit dialogue fictif. L'un de ses traits caractéristiques est justement la dimension interlocutive. Elle nous ramène à la tradition philosophique où le cadre dialogique est un trait définitoire. Quoi qu'il en soit, même dans la tradition philosophique, il faudrait comprendre le concept de « dialogue » dans le sens large du terme puisque les termes « dialogue », « diatribe » et « débat » font référence à des réalités similaires (Lévy 2002 : 23).

Le livre I de l'*Adversus nationes* commence par un exorde (chap. 1) dans lequel l'auteur pose les raisons qui l'ont amené à composer sa défense. Au fil d'un bon nombre de chapitres, il mentionne les deux accusations les plus graves dont les chrétiens étaient l'objet, c'est-à-dire, d'être responsables de maux inhabituels qui affectaient le genre humain et de tenter d'exterminer le culte aux dieux traditionnels.[14] Arnobe résout *contraire invidiae et calumniosas dissolvere criminationes* par le biais d'un discours qu'il qualifie de « médiocre » en recourant au topique de fausse humilité. Il convient de souligner que dès le début du discours, l'auteur s'affronte aux accusations en disqualifiant les accusateurs au moyen d'une accumulation (de toutes celles qui parsèment le discours) de verbes quasiment synonymes (*insanire, bacchari et velut ... ex oraculo dicere*). Son intention est de faire ressortir l'incohérence de telles accusations pour être le fruit du délire, de la folie des gens orgueilleux et excessivement confiants dans leur savoir (*qui se plurimum sapere suis persuasionibus credunt*). Parallèlement, face au dénigrement des accusateurs, et par conséquent, des accusations exposées par ces derniers, l'auteur évalue le type de cause à laquelle il s'affronte en ce qui concerne la difficulté pour assurer dûment sa défense (1, 3) : *neque enim negauerim ualidissimam esse accusationem istam.* Ainsi, dès le début Arnobe reconnaît la gravité des accusations tout en dénigrant ses accusateurs pour présenter les charges citées comme conséquence de l'inconscience, du délire et de la folie de ces derniers.

Après l'exorde commence l'argumentation qui consiste en une vaste réfutation des accusations auxquelles il a fait référence (Le Bonniec 1982 : 30) (1,

14 *Adv. Nat.*, 1,1.1 : *Postquam esse in mundo Christiana gens coepit ... multiformibus malis affectum esse genus humanum, ipsos etiam caelites ... terrarum ab regionibus exterminatos.*

2, 2) : *Efficietur … ut non impii nos magis sed illi ipsi reperiantur criminis istius rei.* Cependant, avant d'inventorier de telles accusations, il affirme que son argumentation est congruente du point de vue logique (1,2,1–2 : *momentorum parium examinatione pendamus. Efficietur enim profecto rationum consequentium copulatu*) et fondée sur des raisons dépourvues de passion (1,2,1 : *summotis omnibus contentionibus studiis quibus obscurari et contegi contemplatio rerum solet*). Il semble évident qu'Arnobe prétend souligner le contraste entre certaines accusations basées sur un raisonnement délirant et, par conséquent, inconscient, et sa réfutation pourvue d'arguments cohérents et mesurés. Avant de procéder à la réfutation proprement dite, l'auteur insiste sur le fait que les termes dans lesquels il l'exprime sont présidés par la sérénité et la bonne grâce (1, 3, 1) : *familiari et placida oratione perquirimus*. Il est important de remarquer l'insistance d'Arnobe sur le ton rationnel et modéré de son argumentation. À notre avis, l'auteur prétend offrir une image déterminée de lui-même et situer son apparente *apatheia* et rationalité dans le cadre du débat philosophique. En fait, les œuvres philosophiques de Cicéron et le *De rerum natura* lucrétien constituent deux des sources latines les plus influentes chez Arnobe. Son admiration pour Cicéron, qui se manifeste dans des passages comme III, 5–6, apparaît également, selon nous, dans l'adoption de traits de ses œuvres philosophiques, c'est-à-dire, du mode dialogué que lui-même appelle *disputatio* tel qu'il le définit dans le prélude au livre I des *Tusculanes* I, 1.[15]

Bien que l'absence d'un échange réel des questions et des réponses de même que le ton ironique de nombreuses interpellations d'Arnobe induisent à considérer son écrit réfutatif plus une *declamatio* qu'une *disputatio* philosophique, l'exorde de l'œuvre et les affirmations de l'auteur sur le ton et la finalité de cette dernière nous mènent cependant à la situer dans le cadre du dialogue philosophique. L'adoption du schéma dialogique se concrétise, d'après nous, dans l'usage des procédés suivants :

15 Dans la préface du livre I des *Tusculanes* Cicéron établit une relation de continuité entre ses *disputationes* et la tradition socratique de la réfutation systématique des opinions (Lévy 2002 : 26). Cependant, au début du deuxième livre, il considère Aristote comme le modèle de sa *disputatio*. Selon Lévy (2002 : 26) : « la méthode d'Aristote était celle de la *disputatio in utramque partem*, non celle du *contra omnia semper dicere* d'Arcésilas ». Cicéron néglige ces distinctions et essaie d'unifier les deux aspects de la tradition platonicienne relatives à la *disputatio* : celle qui vise la recherche du vraisemblable et celle qui nie la possibilité de le trouver. L'essentiel, c'est qu'il met la rhétorique au service de la philosophie. Pour Arnobe comme pour Cicéron, la rhétorique est décisive pour le développement de l'argumentation dans le cadre dialogique.

– Insertion d'interpellations continues à l'interlocuteur. L'auteur reproduit fréquemment au style direct les accusations et les objections de ses accusateurs. Sur ce point, il faut dire que la figure de l'interlocuteur et celle de l'accusateur ne coïncident pas toujours puisque le premier a une portée plus vaste et parfois l'orateur se dirige généralement à une espèce d'auditoire universel.[16] En fait, l'interlocuteur fictif représente différents types de récepteur et masque, par conséquent, une réalité communicative variée et complexe d'une façon similaire à ce qui peut être constaté dans les dialogues philosophiques cicéroniens.[17]
– La pratique de la *concessio* et de la *divisio* comme procédés dialectiques et rhétoriques qui servent à articuler le déroulement de l'argumentation.
– L'abondance de raisonnements aussi bien syllogistiques et déductifs qu'inductifs par le biais d'un style fondamentalement rhétorique.

En ce qui concerne le premier de ces traits, il faut souligner qu'Arnobe montre un spécial intérêt pour intercaler des références qui mettent en évidence le déroulement du débat dans un cadre qui respecte les normes de politesse et de modération propres à la dispute philosophique. Ainsi, dans I, 25,2 il fait une référence explicite à l'obligation des deux parties impliquées dans un débat dialectique pour élucider, à travers des arguments, la vérité.[18] Dans I, 32,1–2 également, l'auteur reconnaît ne pas être en mesure de prouver des questions en relation à la divinité par le raisonnement logique-philosophique : ce

16 I, 29, 1 : *Atque utinam daretur, in unius speciem contionis toto orbe contracto, oratione hac uti et humani in generis audientia conlocari* ; I, 32, 1 : *Sermo cum his nobis est qui diuinum esse consentientes genus de maioribus dubitant cum idem esse plebeia atque humiliora fateantur*.

17 Lévy (2002 : 28) relève que l'interlocuteur anonyme des *Tusculanes* assume des fonctions diverses tout au long des cinq livres. Parfois il représente un lecteur générique dépourvu de culture philosophique. D'autres fois, il joue le rôle du novice et de sa progression. Il peut être aussi *l'alter ego* de l'auteur. De même, l'interlocuteur fictif de *l'Adversus nationes* représente des divers types de lecteur : la plupart des fois il fait allusion d'une manière générique aux lecteurs. À d'autres moments, il s'agit de gens qui pratiquent encore des cultes païens et se montrent méfiants à l'égard des chrétiens. Quelquefois, l'interlocuteur représente explicitement les accusateurs qui ont fait des accusations reproduites par Arnobe : il s'agit probablement de prêtres ou philosophes païens nommés avec le terme *sacri* ou *interpretes divini*.

18 I, 25, 2 : *Sed si non est molestum, non graue, si communis officii res est, non ex gratia sed ex uero disceptationis huius disceptare momenta, audire a uobis exposcimus quaenam sit haec ratio* …

dernier se révèle incapable pour prouver des vérités théologiques.[19] En réalité, le traité est un discours de réfutation dont la finalité réside surtout à prouver l'iniquité des accusations lancées contre les chrétiens, plutôt que de collaborer avec l'adversaire quant à la vérification d'une hypothèse donnée. D'un autre côté, le ton supposé modéré qui s'annonce dans les commentaires cités et qui se maintient dans quelques vocatifs par lesquels l'auteur interpelle l'interlocuteur générique,[20] disparaît pour faire place, très souvent, à des réprimandes au ton ironique et même virulent.[21]

Par rapport au deuxième trait signalé (la pratique de la *concessio* et de la *divisio*), le souci d'Arnobe pour doter son discours de procédés propres du débat dialectique est à nouveau remarquable. Dans ce sens, il convient de rappeler l'influence de la tradition platonique-aristotélicienne dans toutes les formes d'argumentation philosophique et le caractère central qu'occupe le dialogue comme schéma narratif spécialement indiqué pour le raisonnement dialectique. Aristote, qui concevait le dialogue comme une activité fondamentalement réfutative, établit les règles qui régissent le déroulement du débat, spécialement, les tâches de celui qui interroge et de celui qui répond.[22] Bien que le traité arnobien ne soit pas un dialogue, on peut cependant affirmer qu'il imite ledit format : l'auteur recourt à la fiction dialoguée en soulevant les objections et les accusations d'un interlocuteur générique.[23] Il adopte également cer-

19 I, 32, 1–2 : *Quid ergo, res tantas argumentis nitemur atque elaborabimus obtinere ? Discedat haec longe atque a nobis procul, procul inquam, ut dicitur, auerruncetur amentia. Tam est enim periculosum argumentis adgredi deum principem conprobare quam ratione huiusmodi esse illum uelle cognoscere. Nec quicquam refert aut discrepat, utrumne neges illum an asseras atque existere fatearis, cum in eadem culpa sit et adsertio talis rei et abnegatio refutatoris increduli.*

20 I, 36, 2 : *Si uobis iucundum est, amici, edissertate quinam sint hi dii.*

21 I, 26, 1 : (…) *propter quod uos ipsi, cum libido incesserit saeua, exuitis nos bonis, exterminatis patriis sedibus, inrogatis supplicia capitalia, torquetis … et beluarum laniatibus obiectatis ?* ; I, 41, 1–6 : *Et tamen, o isti, qui hominem nos colere morte functum ignominiosa ridetis … aut igitur ridendi et uos estis qui homines grauissimis cruciatibus interemptos deos putatis et colitis* ; I, 42, 3 : *Ergone, inquiet aliquis furens, iratus et percitus, deus ille est Christus ?* ; I, 43, 1 : *Occursurus forsitan rursus est cum aliis multis calumniosis illis et puerilibus uocibus* ; I, 43, 2 : *Quid dicitis, o paruuli, incomperta uobis et nescia temerariae uocis loquacitate garrientes ?* ; I, 51, 1 : *Quid dicitis, o mentes incredulae, difficiles, durae ?* ; I, 53, 1 : *Desistite, o nescii, in maledicta conuertere res tantas nihil ei nocitura qui fecit.*

22 Ces règles constituent le sujet du VIIIème chapitre des *Topiques*. D'ailleurs, Aristote formule les règles concernant les questions et les réponses du dialogue dialectique dans le IIème chapitre des *Refutations sophistiques* (Gourinat 2002 : 466).

23 Vid. not. 17.

taines tâches attribuées au réfutateur : les formules de concession, l'obligation de répondre aux accusations proférées sans les élucider, les formules de courtoisie et bien évidemment, comme nous le verrons, la pratique du raisonnement syllogistique. Il est vrai que dans le genre apologétique, l'argumentation est, à un degré considérable, une opération réfutative. D'autre part, l'adoption des traits propres au débat dialectique constitue, à notre avis, une stratégie pour opérer de manière efficace devant des interlocuteurs à haut niveau culturel qui pourraient même être des représentants de courants philosophiques déterminés.[24] Mais il s'agit aussi d'un moyen de mettre en scène le discours et de renforcer d'autres procédés rhétoriques qui, associés au schéma dialogué, accentuent la force communicative et la dimension scénique du discours. Cette dimension dialectique-rhétorique se trouve explicitée dans des passages comme I, 25,2[25] ou I, 32, 1–2.[26]

Pour ce qui est du type d'argumentation, il est indispensable de rappeler la capacité de l'auteur à développer des schémas de raisonnement déductif propre au débat philosophique et de les doter formellement d'une surabondance de procédés rhétoriques. Dans ce qui suit, nous allons offrir une description sommaire des principales lignes argumentatives du livre I.

Le début de la réfutation a lieu à travers une longue énumération d'interrogations rhétoriques introduites par une expression anaphorique qui se répète comme un refrain (*numquid*) et qui est précédée d'une demande où l'auteur élabore la question principale (I, 2, 3) : *postquam esse nomen in terris Christianae religionis occepit, quidnam inusitatum, quid incognitum, quid contra leges principaliter institutas aut sensit aut passa est rerum ipsa quae dicitur appellaturque natura ?* Les interrogations servent à exposer des aspects divers de la thèse posée par l'accusation et à la réfuter avec fermeté. Ce procédé qui

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24 Les lecteurs auxquels le traité est dirigé ne constituent pas un ensemble uniforme. Comme nous l'avons dit (vid. n. 17) Arnobe s'adresse tantôt à une deuxième personne générique, tantôt à l'ensemble de non-chrétiens, tantôt aux prêtres qui administrent des cultes païens (vid. I, 17, 1 : *Et tamen, o magni cultores atque antistites numinum* ; I, 24, 2 : *Quin immo, ut uerius proloquar, haruspices has fabulas, coniectores, harioli, uates et numquam non uani concinnauere fanatici* ; I, 28, 1 : *Quid dicitis, o sacri, quid, diuini interpretes uiri*). Dans I, 31,4 il s'en rapporte explicitement aux philosophes ou savants avec mépris à cause de leur refus obstiné à croire en Dieu : *Audimus enim quosdam philosophandi studio deditos partim ullam negare uim esse diuinam, partim an si cotidie quaerere ... hoc tempore nullum nobis omnino super tali erit obstinatione certamen.*

25 I, 25, 2 : *Sed si non est molestum, non graue, si communis officii res est, non ex gratia sed ex uero disceptationis huius disceptare momenta, audire a uobis exposcimus quaenam sit haec ratio.*

26 Vid. n. 19.

consiste à souligner exhaustivement la propre position par le biais d'une longue série d'interrogations rhétoriques est l'une des stratégies définitoires du style d'Arnobe : en elles se concentre une accumulation exubérante de contenus souvent précédés par un terme ou une expression qui comme un refrain interpelle constamment le lecteur. D'un autre côté, sous cette exubérance expressive, se trouve une chaîne sous-jacente d'arguments assemblés avec cohérence et logique. Dans les lignes qui suivent nous allons surtout faire valoir en quoi consiste cette structure logique et comment elle est menée à bien.

La réfutation initiée dans le chapitre III, 3 s'articule à travers quelques lignes argumentatives majeures que l'auteur remarque en insérant des conclusions partielles situées à la fin de certains chapitres. La macrostructure du livre se conforme, en principe, autour de deux thèses fondamentales. La première se développe tout au long des chapitres 2–25 : dans lesdits chapitres, l'accusation contre des chrétiens comme responsables des maux et des malheurs qui accablent le monde est réfutée. Dans la seconde partie, celle qui comprend les chapitres 26–65, la nature de Dieu comme divinité suprême et celle du Christ comme envoyé de Dieu se trouve définie.

La première section, d'autre part, constitue la négation d'une accusation dont la structure logique est celle d'une inférence causale : l'abondance des maux qui vicient le monde est due à l'existence des chrétiens et au culte à leur Dieu. Toute la réfutation est un habile exercice rhétorique pour nier la fausseté de l'inférence et prouver son caractère fallacieux. L'auteur démontre que la présence des chrétiens n'est pas une condition suffisante et encore moins nécessaire pour expliquer les maux qui existent dans le monde, c'est-à-dire qu'il détruit la relation présumée cause-effet parmi les prémisses citées. Pour mener à bien l'argumentation, il recourt à l'observation de la réalité fixée dans les phénomènes naturels et sociaux au fil du temps. Il est intéressant de souligner qu'Arnobe inclue des conclusions partielles au cours de l'argumentation pour marquer et articuler le raisonnement de façon cohérente.[27] En prouvant que les malheurs naturels et les guerres ont existé à toutes les époques, que les

27 Vid. e.g. les passages suivants où l'auteur souligne une même idée à travers de raisonnements conclusifs, I, 5, 7 : (…) *quemadmodum possimus miseriarum esse praesentium causae cum noui fiat nihil sed sint omnia uetera et nullis antiquitatibus inaudita ?*; I, 9, 4 : *Euenta haec omnia quae fiunt et accidunt mole sub hac mundi commodulis non sunt nostris sed ipsius pendenda sunt rationibus ordinibusque naturae*; I, 13, 3 : *Hoc primum efficiendum est ei qui nos arguit, perpetuas et iuges calamitates fuisse has, numquam omnia non respirasse mortalia et sine ullis, ut dicitur, feriis multiplicium formas sustinuisse discriminum.*

témoignages écrits en font preuve et qu'il existe d'autres raisons pour expliquer leur existence, il démontre que l'inférence causale est fallacieuse : les dénommés « arguments fallacieux du *post hoc* » établissent une relation causale entre deux faits sans autre fondement que l'apparition simultanée ou successive de ces derniers. Les arguments basés sur les topiques *ante rem* et *in re* (guerres et catastrophes naturelles antérieures et contemporaines au christianisme) servent à l'auteur pour dissocier la relation présumée causale entre l'expansion des chrétiens et l'existence de maux et pour annuler les accusations.

En plus de prouver la fausseté de l'inférence citée ci-dessus, Arnobe admet de manière hypothétique l'influence sur cette dernière d'un autre facteur complémentaire pour ensuite le réfuter : les chrétiens auraient mis en colère les dieux avec leurs pratiques et cette colère divine aurait provoqué les maux qui accablent le monde. Une *reductio ad absurdum* présente sur un ton ironique et incisif cette colère divine comme une hypothèse ridicule.[28] La réalité sert à nouveau à démentir ladite hypothèse : Arnobe aborde cette seconde inférence causale avec une réflexion qui s'étend tout au long des chapitres 23 et 24. Dans celle-ci, la *retorsio* culmine avec le « retour » de l'accusation d'impiété aux accusateurs (24, 1 : *vestra sunt haec, uestra sunt inreligiose opinata et inreligiosius credita*) et le discrédit, non pas de tous les récepteurs mais surtout d'une partie des accusateurs : les *haruspices*, devins et prêtres fanatiques qui prétendent maintenir les cultes antiques et les traditions pour ne pas perdre leur travail et leurs gains. Sur un ton agressif qui essaie de ridiculiser un secteur déterminé de récepteurs de son traité, l'auteur finit son argumentation contre la première accusation. Désormais, le noyau de l'argumentation ne porte pas tant sur la fausseté de l'inférence causale citée que dans la notion de divinité suprême que les chrétiens attribuent au Christ. En d'autres mots, dans la deuxième partie, (1, 25–65) Arnobe traite surtout des croyances chrétiennes représentées par la figure du Christ et de l'action de celui-ci contrairement aux dieux païens.

Comme nous pouvons le déduire avec ce qui est dit ci-dessus, l'auteur exécute cette vaste rétorsion en utilisant principalement deux tactiques dialectiques (la *divisio* et la *concessio*), des *loci* rhétoriques bien déterminés (les *loci*

28 1, 17, 3–5 : *Hoc ergo dii magni norunt, perpetiuntur et sentiunt quod ferae, quod beluae, quod mortiferae continent uenenato in dente natrices … et quid ergo sequitur necesario nisi ut ex eorum luminibus scintillae emicent flammeae, aestuet anhelum pectus, spuma iactetur ex ore et ex uerbis ardentibus labrorum siccitas inalbescat* ? ; 1, 19, 1 : *Quid quod isto modo non tantum illos leues ac feruidos, uerum – quod ab diis conuenit procul esse dimotum – et iniquos inducitis et iniustos et aequitatis uel modicae nullam prorsus obtinere rationem ?*

a re et leurs multiples subdivisions) tout comme son usage de l'ironie. D'autre part, comme il s'agit d'une réfutation, le raisonnement de type déductif basé sur la *reductio ad absurdum* est souvent présent.

Pour ce qui est de la *divisio*, il faut dire que son application permet à Arnobe de montrer les aspects différents et multiples contenus dans un argument. Il faut rappeler sur ce point que la pratique de la *divisio* est l'opération dialectique qui, avec la synthèse, permet d'avancer dans la recherche de la vérité. C'est pour cela qu'elle est tout spécialement utile dans la pratique argumentative. Ainsi, par exemple, dans la réfutation de la première accusation, les chrétiens ne sont les responsables d'aucun mal puisque la nature possède ses propres lois et il ne s'est produit aucun nouveau phénomène depuis que les chrétiens existent dans le monde. En outre, le concept central *rerum natura ipsa* se ramifie et se divise en de nombreuses interrogations rhétoriques qui expriment les diverses aspects de la réalité physique, sociale et politique du monde. Cette tactique s'utilise constamment et entraîne une surabondance de raisons qui, en vertu de l'accumulation, acquièrent une grande force persuasive. En outre, à de nombreuses reprises, sa force expressive et vivante reflète une influence lucrétienne évidente[29] et peut même être considérée comme un exemple d'*evidentia*. En général, les exemples, pris de la réalité physique et sociale, constituent des arguments basés sur l'expérience qui, pour leur vivacité, fournissent un témoignage véridique : des exemples agrémentés de réalisme et de détails se trouvent dans les chapitres 8 et 9 (les phénomènes qui répondent aux lois naturelles), 43,5 (des actions menées à bien par des mages et des devins), 45–46 et 50, 3–7 (des descriptions de faits miraculeux mis en œuvre par le Christ) et 53, 4 (description de la terre au moment de la résurrection).[30] Parfois, le réalisme terni d'ironie sert à ridiculiser sur un ton humoristique les arguments de l'accusation, comme nous pouvons l'apprécier au 17, 2–5 (où la

29 Les passages où l'auteur énumère des *exempla* extraits de la réalité sont très abondants (chapitres 2, 3, 4, 5 et 9 ; 13, 14 et 15 ; 20, 21, etc.). Comme Le Bonniec le dit dans son édition du traité (1982 : 200), les réminiscences du *De rerum natura* de Lucrèce sont fréquents tout au long des premiers chapitres du livre I.

30 L'abondance de passages qui offrent des descriptions détaillées avec une fonction argumentative constitue l'un des traits caractéristiques de ce traité, par exemple, dans I, 53, 44 : *Exutus at corpore quod in exigua sui circumferebat parte, postquam uideri se passus est, cuius esset aut magnitudinis sciri, nouitate rerum exterrita uniuersa mundi sunt elementa turbata, tellus mota contremuit, mare funditus refusum est, aer globis inuolutus est tenebrarum, igneus orbis solis tepefacto ardore deriguit. Quid enim restabat ut fieret, postquam deus est cognitus is qui esse iamdudum unus iudicabatur e nobis ?*

colère des dieux est décrite avec ironie),[31] ou dans 41, 6, passage où l'on ridiculise le culte aux personnages païens qui furent l'objet d'ignominie.[32]

Quant à la *concessio* elle peut être considérée comme une procédure propre au débat qui apparaît souvent liée à la règle de courtoisie. En fait, Arnobe utilise des formules au ton courtois qu'il dirige à l'interlocuteur. Ces formules appartiennent à la tradition philosophique du débat dialectique tel qu'il est exprimé dans les dialogues platoniciens ou dans les règles pour le débat posées par Aristote dans le chapitre VIII des Topiques.[33] Cependant, indépendamment des formules de courtoisie, le fait d'octroyer ou d'accepter en partie l'argument de la partie contraire est l'une des manœuvres des plus efficaces pour mener à bien une réfutation. La stratégie la plus intelligente et celle qui, d'après Cattani, doit s'exercer en premier lieu est de (2003: 161) «se demander s'il est possible de manipuler à notre avantage ce que soutient l'autre». Cependant, il faut souligner que la concession chez Arnobe est une tactique rhétorique puisqu'il ne s'agit pas d'une concession réelle: l'auteur part des accusations de l'antagoniste pour démontrer qu'il se trouve dans l'erreur. Etant donné qu'il s'agit d'une attaque masquée, les connotations ironiques sont fréquentes. Certains exemples de cette manœuvre argumentative se trouvent dans les chapitres 25, 29, 35 ou encore au chapitre 38 où un recueil de formules sont introduites pour souligner l'acceptation partielle de la thèse contraire (*Sed sint, ut vultis; sed concedamus, etiamsi esset id uerum*, etc.).[34] Naturellement, après

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31 17, 2–5: *Quid est enim aliud irasci quam insanire, quam furere, quam in ultionis libidinem ferri et in alterius doloris cruces efferati pectoris alienatione bacchari? Hoc ergo dii magni norunt, perpetiuntur et sentiunt quod ferae, quod beluae, quod mortiferae continent venenato in dente natrices. Quod levitatis in homine, quod terreno in animante culpabile est, praestans illa natura et in perpetuae virtutis firmitate consistens scire adseveratur a vobis: et quid ergo sequitur necessario, nisi ut ex eorum luminibus scintillae emicent flammeae, aestuet anhelum pectus, spuma iactetur ex ore et ex verbis ardentibus labrorum siccitas inalbescat*?

32 1, 41, 6: *Aut igitur ridendi et uos estis qui homines grauissimis cruciatibus interemptos deos putatis et colitis.*

33 En dépit de ce qu'Arnobe affirme au début du traité (2.1: *Inspiciamus igitur opinionis istius mentem … summotisque omnibus contentionum studiis quibus obscurari et contegi contemplatio rerum solet*), les formules de politesse sont moins fréquentes que les blâmes virulents contre ses accusateurs. Nous pouvons trouver des telles formules au 2,3 (*Ac primum ab his illud familiari et placida oratione perquirimus*), 25, 2 (*Sed si non est molestum, non graue … audire a uobis exposcimus quaenam sit ratio …*) et 36, 2 (*Si uobis iucundum est, amici, edissertate quinam sint hi dii*).

34 Un exemple qui montre l'utilisation de la *concessio* avec une formule de politesse est ajouté dans 25, 1–2: *Ac ne quis nos tamen diffidentia responsionis tranquillitatis existimet*

l'apparente concession, l'auteur prouve à partir d'exemples basés sur des faits observables, que les conclusions inférées sont absurdes.[35]

Quoiqu'il en soit, le raisonnement, en général, est de caractère inductif puisque la plus grande partie des arguments sont extraits des différents *loci a re* et *a persona*, c'est-à-dire, de faits et de circonstances liés à l'émergence, et à l'expansion du culte chrétien : les lieux de la définition, des idées contraires, la mention des antécédents et des causes … s'appliquent constamment à partir de témoignages historiques et personnels, des descriptions de la réalité, des passages littéraires et des réflexions philosophiques. Ainsi, lesdits lieux constituent des arguments inductifs basés sur le réel ou sur des autorités écrites diverses dont la présence a été documentée et débattue dans les éditions de ces œuvres.[36] Il faut mettre en relief l'utilisation abondante des lieux basés sur des idées ou des notions contraires et aussi sur des comparaisons de faits similaires comme il se doit d'une œuvre polémique de caractère réfutatif. Ainsi, dans le chapitre 6 par exemple, l'accusation de provoquer des maux est rejetée avec la défense de l'idée contraire à partir du message pacificateur

deos donare muneribus, innoxias adfingere his mentes atque ab omni perturbatione dimotas, concedamus, sicut libitum est uobis, intendere in nos iras, sanguinem illos sitire nostrum et iamdudum nos cupere mortalium submouere de saeculis. Sed si non est molestum, non graue, si communis officii res est, non ex gratia sed ex uero disceptationis huius disceptare momenta, audire a uobis exposcimus quaenam sit haec ratio … quam in nos tantum et dii saeuiant superi et asperati homines inardescant.

35 Un exemple qui prouve l'efficacité de cette stratégie est celui du passage 35, 1–2 : Arnobe admit apparemment la prémisse de ses accusateurs (*Sed sint, ut uultis, unum nec in aliqua ui numinis et maiestate distantes* – le Dieu suprême et Juppiter) mais après la *concessio*, il ridiculise et invalide une telle hypothèse par le biais d'interrogations rhétoriques qui prouvent que les conséquences dérivées de celle-ci sont inadmissibles. De tels passages sont assez abondants dans le livre I.

36 On a souligné l'absence presque totale de citations bibliques dans *l'Adversus nationes*. Cette absence peut s'expliquer, comme nous le verrons dans les conclusions, à partir du dessein d'Arnobe et de la stratégie argumentative qu'il adopte pour l'atteindre : réfuter l'accusation adressée contre les chrétiens d'être des impies et de provoquer des malheurs qui existent dans le monde, et de montrer aux païens les vérités du christianisme. Afin d'atteindre l'adhésion des païens, Arnobe utilise les ressources argumentatives exercées habituellement par les philosophes et savants païens, c'est-à-dire, des raisonnements inductifs et déductifs provenant de ressources dialectique-rhétoriques. Il ne fait pas appel à des textes chrétiens parce que ses adversaires sûrement ne les connaissaient pas et ne leur accordaient aucun crédit. Les seules références qu'il mentionne sont des miracles du Christ, des prodiges qui accompagnèrent sa mort et d'autres faits concernant ses premiers disciples. Selon Monceaux (Le Bonniec 1982 : 71), Arnobe connaissait ces données surtout par le biais de la tradition populaire.

du Christ. La longue comparaison descriptive avec laquelle le livre I se ferme, est également remarquable. À travers une métaphore connue dans la tradition philosophique païenne, le Christ est comparé à un médecin qui a la capacité de soigner tous types de maux, et, malgré cela, il est rejeté.[37] D'autre part, à partir du chapitre 25, la présence de l'interlocuteur fictif comme porte-parole des termes concrets de l'accusation, résulte de plus en plus fréquente : Arnobe réfute lesdites calomnies en citant des accusations de nature similaire extraites de la tradition mythologique et de l'histoire gréco-romaine.

De pair avec le raisonnement inductif, qui est le plus fréquent, nous trouvons également de nombreux exemples d'argumentation déductive qui adoptent dans certaines occasions, une structure syllogistique et dans d'autres, consistent en des inférences qui poussent à l'extrême les implications des principes énoncés. Un exemple illustratif est celui qui se trouve aux chapitres 17 et 18. Dans le premier de ces exemples, Arnobe lance comme accusation à ses adversaires la folie d'attribuer aux dieux des émotions et des sentiments humains. À partir de ce principe, l'auteur pousse à l'extrême les conséquences qui dérivent de ladite thèse et il les ridiculise sur un ton ironique (17,5).

Un passage semblable est à souligner dans le chapitre 18 où Arnobe développe un raisonnement syllogistique de contenu philosophique pour défendre ladite thèse : si les dieux sont affectés par la colère et par des émotions similaires, ils ne peuvent être considérés comme des divinités. Pour la démontrer, l'auteur recourt à un raisonnement appuyé sur l'autorité des courants philosophiques qui attaquent l'influence néfaste des émotions.[38] Etant donné que, comme nous l'avons indiqué, Arnobe tend à insister sur ses thèses par le biais de conclusions qui incitent à la même idée,[39] nous trouvons de très nombreux exemples de raisonnement syllogistique avec un contenu similaire tout au long du livre I. Il faut préciser que dans ce sens, à plusieurs occasions, les prémisses qui servent de point de partie sont de fausses généralisations, c'est-à-dire, des opinions qui sont présentées comme des idées admises. Cependant, ce type d'erreur a une efficacité rhétorique évidente. Un exemple

37 65, 2 : *Si aliquis ad uos medicus ex summotis uenisset et numquam uobis regionibus cognitis, medicamen pollicens tale quod a uestris corporibus omnia omnino prohiberet morborum et ualetudinum genera ... non illud medicaminis genus optaretis esse certissimum* (...).

38 18, 2 : *Ubi enim est ullus, sicut sapientibus uidetur, adfectus, ibi esse necesse est passionem; ubi passio sita est, perturbatio est, ibi dolor et aegritudo est; ubi dolor et aegritudo est, imminutioni et corruptioni iam locus est; quae duo si uexant, adest uicinus interitus, mors omnia finiens et cunctis adimens sentientibus uitam.*

39 Vid. n. 27.

de ce que nous venons d'affirmer se trouve au 28, 6–8.[40] A cet égard, il faut dire qu'Arnobe fait usage de ce type d'argumentation propre aux intellectuels instruits dans la Rhétorique et dans la Philosophie même s'il fustige le caractère fallacieux et vide du raisonnement philosophique.[41] Et ce, parce qu'il est conscient que l'efficacité de son apologie dépend, dans une certaine mesure, de l'habileté dialectique-rhétorique qu'il pourra démontrer devant un secteur de son audience.

Il faut garder à l'esprit que dans le cadre idéologique, culturel et religieux où fut composé l'*Adversus nationes* le néoplatonisme, avec sa dimension sotériologique, constituait peut-être le danger principal pour la diffusion du christianisme parmi des gens cultivés. Pour Arnobe ou pour Lactance la défense de la doctrine était très importante pour démontrer que les auteurs chrétiens étaient capables d'utiliser le même raffinement stylistique et argumentatif que les philosophes païens (Wlosok 1989 : 133).

En plus des procédés mentionnés, il faut ajouter, pour finir, l'abondante présence de certains recours rhétoriques qui apportent une couleur particulière au style arnobien. Parmi ces recours, les figures basées sur la répétition et l'ironie, à laquelle nous avons fait référence à d'autres endroits dans ce travail, jouent un rôle spécial. Il en va de même pour les blâmes dirigés à l'adversaire, qui, parfois, deviennent de véritables arguments *ad hominem* dont la finalité est de dégrader les accusateurs et, en le faisant, d'invalider leurs accusations. Les passages du livre I où un mot est à la tête, en guise de refrain, de toute une série d'exemples, ou les particules interrogatives qui introduisent d'interminables interrogations rhétoriques,[42] sont nombreux. Dans ces blâmes, l'abondance d'exemples est, en elle-même, un recours argumentatif. Mais, peut-être que le trait le plus caractéristique est l'attitude ironique et moqueuse qu'Arnobe

40 28, 6–8 : *Nam si omnes concedimus unum esse principem solum, quem nulla res alia uetustate temporis antecedat, post illum necesse est cuncta et nata esse et prodita et in sui nominis prosiluisse naturam. Quod si fixum et ratum est, erit nobis consequens confiteri et deos esse natiuos et a principe rerum fonte ortus sui originem ducere. Qui si sunt natiui et geniti, et interitionibus utique periculisque uicini … Ergo istud munus dei patris et donum est, ut infinita meruerint idem esse per saecula cum sint labiles solubilesque natura.*

41 58, 2–3 : *Numquam enim ueritas sectata est fucum nec quod exploratum et certum est circumduci se patitur orationis per ambitum longiorem. Collectiones, enthymemata, definitiones omniaque illa ornamenta quibus fides queritur adsertionis suspicantes adiuuant, non ueritatis liniamenta demonstrant. Ceterum qui scit quid sit illud quod dicitur nec definit nec colligit neque alia sectatur artificia uerborum quibus capi consueti sunt audientes et ad consensum rei circumscriptionis necessitate traduci.*

42 Quelque exemples sont 4, 1–3 (*non ante nos* ?), 8, 1–6 et 9, 1–4 (*Quid si*) ; 38, 4–5 (*qui, quod frugiferum, qui quo auctore*, etc.) ; 45, 1–6 (*unus fuit e nobis*), etc.

aborde dans certains de ses blâmes envers les accusateurs. Ironie qui est comparable, parfois, à celle du narrateur satyrique qui se propose de mettre en évidence les vices de la société.[43]

En définitive, l'analyse de l'argumentation du libre I de *l'Adversus nationes* montre une intentionnalité évidente de la part de l'auteur de vouloir situer le raisonnement réfutatif-défensif dans le cadre du débat dialectique propre à la dispute philosophique. Pour cela, l'auteur déploie toute une série de recours argumentatifs présidés par les normes de courtoisie propres du débat philosophique mais qui sont cependant ternis par un ton ironique qui tend à devenir plus agressif dans les livres suivants. Dans le paragraphe suivant, nous confronterons la tactique arnobienne avec celle de Firmicus Maternus.

4 Le *De errore profanarum religionum* de Firmicus Maternus

Nous ignorons presque tout de la vie de Firmicus Maternus, un écrivain né à Siracuse au début du IVème siècle et qui fut surtout connu grâce à un ouvrage de huit livres sur l'astrologie (*Matheseos libri octo*), composé quelques années avant le traité que nous allons commenter. Par rapport à sa biographie nous devons nous en rapporter aux notices qu'il nous donne lui-même dans ses ouvrages.

Le *De errore*, compilé par Firmicus après sa conversion au christianisme, dix ans après avoir composé le *Matheseos* a été unanimement considéré comme une preuve évidente de l'intolérance chrétienne à l'égard des cultes païens. Turcan (1982: 23) définit le traité comme «un pamphlet encore plus fanatique et assurément plus hargneux que ceux de Tertullien ou d'Arnobe». De même, Drake (1998:143)[44] ajoute que Firmicus éleva la rhétorique antipaïenne au plus haut degré puisque pour la première fois il exhorta les empereurs Constance et Constant à détruire les temples des idoles païens, à interdire des cultes et forcer des conversions.[45] Comme nous l'avons montré au début de

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43 Sa critique est presque toujours dirigée, sur un ton moqueur et ironique, contre des devins, des magiciens et des prêtres qui conduisaient des cultes païens: 24, 4: *Et homines, brutum genus et quod situm sub lumine est caecitate ingenita nequeuntes uidere, audent adseuerare furiosi quod uos credere non erubescitis sani*; 43, 1: *Occursurus forsitan rursus est cum aliis multis calumniosis illis et puerilibus uocibus*; 43, 2: *Quid dicitis, o parvuli … nescia temerariae vocis loquacitate garrientes?*; 51, 1: *quid dicitis, o mentes incredulae, difficiles, durae* (…), etc.

44 Kahlos (2009:136) a récemment défendu que Firmicus fut le premier écrivain chrétien qui promut une annihilation totale du paganisme.

45 *De errore* 16, 4–5: *Nolunt quidam et repugnant et exitium suum prona cupiditate deside-*

ce travail, l'apologétique tardo-antique ne constitue pas un ensemble homogène. En effet, il est possible de distinguer plusieurs étapes qui dépendent du contexte politique et religieux dans lesquel ces livres furent composés, et aussi du contenu et de la conformation des œuvres.[46] A partir des successeurs de Constantin, les apologistes se proposent non seulement de défendre la doctrine et le culte chrétiens mais surtout d'attaquer les traditions païennes, qui subsistent avec force, et d'imposer des mesures coercitives pour favoriser des conversions. Tout au long des siècles IV et V nous pouvons observer un endurcissement progressif des lois destinées à interdire la pratique de la divination, les sacrifices des animaux, la construction d'autels et de cultes païens (Fernández Ubiña et Marcos 2007 ; Lim 2012 : 497–510). Kahlos (2009 : 64) affirme que les empereurs romains possédaient, parmi leurs attributions, le pouvoir de réglementer les pratiques religieuses de sorte que les actions de Constantin et de ses successeurs doivent être situées dans le cadre de cette tradition. Cependant, d'après Kahlos, il ne semble pas raisonnable de supposer, à partir de ces mesures, l'existence d'un plan systématique d'élimination du paganisme. Le concept même de « paganisme » comme entité prit forme tout au long du IVème siècle. D'un autre côté, la prétendue intolérance n'est pas une démarche attribuable à toute la communauté chrétienne. De même, elle n'a pas montré une virulence égale dans toutes les étapes historiques (Drake 1998 : 146 ; Kahlos 2009 : 73–74). Quoiqu'il en soit, il est vrai que la législation anti-païenne sous Constance fut plus sévère que celle en vigueur sous Constantin :[47] le *De Errore* a été considéré comme une conséquence de ce climat de répression. Il est probable que Firmicus écrivît son traité après l'an 346, date où une loi sévère qui ordonnait de fermer les temples païens fut décrétée. Certains ont supposé que le *De errore* aurait inspiré ou provoqué cette loi mais bien d'autres croient plutôt que le traité serait né à partir du climat mentionné ci-dessus.[48] En ce sens,

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rant. Aegrotantes contraria delectant. L'image utilisée pour justifier de telles représailles est une métaphore médicale connue aussi bien dans la tradition littéraire païenne que dans la chrétienne. Drake (1998 : 134–135) mentionne Platon, e.g. *Grg*. 464d, 467c et, dans la Bible, le livre de l'*Exode* 15, 26.

46 Le *De Errore* et le traité d'Arnobe ont été situés dans l'Apologétique de la période constantinienne bien que nous pouvons remarquer des différences importantes entre eux. L'œuvre de Firmicus présente un type d'argumentation plus typique de l'étape post-constantinienne.

47 Constantin ne voulut pas faire usage de la coercition contre les polythéistes. On peut dire que la politique répressive de la Tétrarchie se modéra, on appela même au consensus et à une vie pacifique en commun. Cependant, les prohibitions et les punitions s'endurcirent progressivement à partir de l'année 324 (Kahlos 2009 : 57).

48 Turcan (1982 : 24) cite l'expression *gladius uindex* qui est mentionnée par Firmicus dans

J. Lössl (2013 : 75) affirme que le *De errore* « is among other aspects also a highly political speech. It reflects imperial policy and by doing so at least purports to attempt to influence it ».

D'autre part, il faut souligner que l'opportunisme politique ou la peur furent la cause de très nombreuses conversions. Ceci pourrait avoir être le cas de Firmicus puisque qu'il fut polythéiste, néo-platonique, admirateur de Porphyre et auteur d'un traité d'astrologie.[49] Firmicus se convertit à un moment où le nombre et la nature des conversions entraînait incertitude et instabilité au sein de la communauté chrétienne. Le traité pourrait être un procédé de l'auteur pour prouver la véracité de sa conversion (Drake 1998 : 146) : « the best defense is a good offense ». Dans ce sens, les dichotomies continuelles que Firmicus présente dans son traité entre certains symboles utilisés dans la célébration des cultes mystériques et les symboles chrétiens correspondants, constituent un recours efficace pour construire l'identité chrétienne. Ladite identité se construisit, comme l'affirma Kahlos, sur des relations entre chrétiens et non chrétiens, ces derniers étant juifs et polythéistes (Kahlos 2007 : 12). De toute manière, l'intolérance que reflète ce traité est un signe de l'évolution du christianisme hégémonique à travers ses leaders politiques et religieux.[50]

Dans les paragraphes suivants nous nous proposons de souligner quelques traits de la technique argumentative de cet auteur afin de la comparer avec celle d'Arnobe. Ces deux écrivains ont habituellement été référencés dans le cadre de l'apologétique constantinienne comme représentants du courant antipaïen virulent que nous avons mentionné. Néanmoins, nous pensons que l'analyse de l'argumentation peut être utile pour souligner des différences entre ces deux traités et pour confirmer la composition de l'*Errore* dans une période postérieure.

Err. Prof. Rel. 29.2 et qui se trouve dans la loi du 346 (le syntagme concret est *gladius ultor*). Une autre expression mentionnée par ladite loi et utilisée fréquemment par Firmicus pour faire référence aux païens est *perditi* (Drake 1998 : 140).

49 Il s'agirait d'un converti qui tenterait de démontrer l'authenticité de sa transformation intérieure à travers l'attaque contre les croyances païennes : ce serait un converse plus intolérant que les chrétiens eux-mêmes (Kahlos 2009 : 69). Selon Drake (1998 : 145), la dynamique des mouvements sociaux montre que, plus une idéologie est profondément enracinée, moins elle est virulente et coercitive. En effet, on suspectait que beaucoup de conversions n'étaient pas authentiques et il était donc nécessaire de les prouver. En conséquence, les traités de Firmicus et d'Arnobe pourraient avoir été des preuves de leur conversion.

50 Drake (2011 : 207–208) a récemment suggéré que cette virulence serait l'une des conséquences d'un conflit latent parmi les empereurs et les évêques pour obtenir le pouvoir.

4.1 *La technique argumentative dans le* De errore profanarum religionum

La structure générale de l'œuvre apologétique de Firmicus Maternus est bien distincte de celle d'Arnobe. De cette dernière, nous avons souligné la solidité de la macrostructure conceptuelle, reposant sur la réfutation de thèses par le biais d'arguments inductifs et déductifs qui sont exprimés par un discours comportant certaines grandes lignes du débat dialectique. Toutefois, l'œuvre de Maternus présente un schéma rhétorique-argumentatif différent. Pour commencer, il ne s'agit pas tant d'une réfutation que d'une critique mordante des traditions religieuses païennes, doublée d'une exhortation à la conversion et d'appels pressants aux empereurs afin que soient éradiqués les cultes païens: le noyau conceptuel de l'œuvre se compose de la description de ces cultes, suivie de réflexions critiques et de demandes d'éradication.

Avant d'aborder les caractéristiques qui définissent le développement argumentatif de cette œuvre apologétique, nous en résumerons brièvement la structure formelle. Le seul manuscrit conservé de l'œuvre étant acéphale, la première partie débute par une lacune, et prend fin au chapitre XVII. L'auteur y décrit bon nombre de traditions religieuses-mythologiques romaines, grecques et orientales telles que le culte des quatre éléments et d'autres pratiques religieuses basées sur des récits mythologiques attribués à diverses divinités (Bacchus, Cérès, Adonis, Jupiter Sébasius, les Corybantes, Sarapis, les Pénates, Minerve, etc.). Traditionnellement, l'intérêt pour Firmicus Maternus s'est nourri des informations abondantes qu'il fournit au sujet de la pratique des cultes païens de tous ordres. Le chapitre XVII, le dernier de cette première section, sert de transition avec la seconde partie et consiste en une réflexion sur la fausseté et l'ignorance qui sous-tendent les traditions décrites, tant en ce qui a trait à la forme externe des idoles énumérées qu'à l'étymologie des noms des dieux.[51] La seconde partie, qui débute au chapitre XVIII, a pour objet de montrer les symboles et les rites pratiqués dans le cadre de certaines traditions mystériques[52] (culte de Mitra, mystères d'Éleusis ou cultes dionysiaques) encore que les références fournies par l'auteur soient plutôt vagues et imprécises (Pastorini 1969: 183–184). Pour présenter les symboles cités, il se contente de mentionner des mots, des formules et des aspects particuliers du rite concerné, sans la moindre allusion au contexte dont ils font partie. Il s'agit de références brèves

51 17, 4: *Videtis ut istos commenticios et fictos deos turbulentus error excogitet, ut superstitionibus anilibus et formae nobis deorum generentur et nomina. Sed haec omnia veritas detexit et ratio sanae mentis invenit.*

52 18, 1: *Libet nunc explanare quibus se signis vel quibus symbolis in ipsis superstitionibus miseranda hominum turba cognoscat.*

car Firmicus cherche avant tout à offrir des répliques bibliques des concepts évoqués, au moyen de références à des passages de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament. Cette seconde section s'étend jusqu'au chapitre 24 inclus, comme l'indique l'auteur lui-même à la fin de celui-ci.[53] Interrompant l'énumération des exemples, l'auteur annonce l'objectif qu'il poursuit dans la troisième et dernière section : prouver le noyau de la croyance chrétienne, à savoir la nature divine et messianique du Christ, moyennant l'énumération et l'interprétation de correspondances entre l'Ancien et le Nouveau Testament.

Comme nous l'avons signalé, les dissemblances que l'on constate entre l'œuvre de Firmicus et le traité arnobien s'expliquent en partie par le cadre politique différent dans lequel ils ont été composés. L'*Adversus nationes* remonte au début du IV siècle, alors que le *De errore* est généralement daté des années 345–350 ;[54] il est par conséquent postérieur à l'Édit de Milan. À une époque où le christianisme s'est érigé en religion officielle et en paradigme idéologique dominant, le principal souci des intellectuels chrétiens est d'éradiquer la pratique encore très étendue et vigoureuse des cultes et rites païens. Ainsi, le traité de Firmicus adopte-t-il la forme rhétorique du *genus deliberativum* car les lieux communs correspondants à ce *genus* de même que la finalité exhortative et parénétique sont essentielles. Dans le traité d'Arnobe, la réfutation et la défense constituent autant d'aspects inséparables d'un discours présentant les éléments caractéristiques du *genus iudiciale* : la présence d'un interlocuteur fictif qu'Arnobe s'efforce de rendre vivant au moyen d'interpellations continues et de la reproduction de réponses, confère au traité un caractère dialectique propre au débat devant un tribunal. Dans le cas de Maternus, il n'y a pas de schéma dialogué, ni d'intervention à proprement parler d'un interlocuteur fictif. C'est au récepteur, en l'occurrence les empereurs Constance et Constant, et les lecteurs en général, que sont destinées les exhortations et les requêtes continues de l'auteur, ainsi que les descriptions critiques et mordantes des pratiques païennes de leur temps. Mais la contre-réplique des interlocuteurs supposés n'étant pas reproduite, le discours offre donc l'aspect d'un sermon. Le caractère délibératif-exhortatif explique que les lieux de l'*utilitas* et *l'honestum*, ainsi que ses contraires (c'est-à-dire l'erreur,

53 24, 4 : (…) *In isto loco positi ordinem debemus sanctae dispositionis aperire, ut quicquit nobis investigantibus sanctum dei verbum prophetica tradidit disciplina, ad refutandas profani erroris maculas specialiter explicetur … Suspensis itaque paululum ceteris ad haec explicanda quae vera sunt transferatur oratio.*

54 Sur la vie de Firmicus, nous ne disposons que des renseignements qu'il nous donne lui-même dans ses œuvres. Pastorini énumère dans son édition quelques dates qui nous mènent à situer la composition entre 345 et 350.

le condamnable et le néfaste) constituent le motif central de tous les récits. De même, l'énumération réitérative de scènes et de faits tirés de la réalité et la mention d'autorités bibliques y sont le recours argumentatif central.[55] Il s'agit par conséquent d'un schéma inductif où les *facta* décrits fonctionnent à la manière d'*exempla* à caractère négatif. Néanmoins, ce qui caractérise Firmicus est sa volonté de présenter les symboles et les rites exposés comme des images personnifiant vices et vilenies. Conditionné peut-être par sa formation néoplatonicienne, les pratiques cultuelles qu'il décrit dans les 17 premiers chapitres sont présentées comme des simulacres du mal qui éloignent les hommes de la vraie voie salvatrice. Dans la première partie, le principal recours qu'il utilise pour démasquer la fausseté supposée des croyances païennes est l'interprétation basée sur le raisonnement naturaliste dans les cinq premiers chapitres et évhémériste dans les dix suivants. L'auteur lui-même souligne la prédominance d'un type de raisonnement ou d'un autre dans les chapitres qui ouvrent chacune desdites parties.[56] À partir du chapitre 17, Firmicus présente certains signes et pratiques propres aux cultes mystériques. Le recours argumentatif le plus frappant dans cette seconde partie est le goût pour les présentations dichotomiques. L'auteur ne se limite pas à décrire le rite ou le signe en question pour le fustiger dans la réflexion subséquente : en guise de contre-exemple, il présente des symboles parallèles existant dans les textes bibliques et les offre comme alternative véritable et salvatrice. Cette présentation dichotomique relève à notre avis de la « rhetoric of difference » qui, à l'avis de Kahlos (2007 : 11–24) caractérise le langage des textes polémiques chrétiens. Plus qu'une simple ressource rhétorique, les fréquentes oppositions binaires, conceptuelles et formelles qu'on relève dans nombre d'œuvres apologétiques sont le reflet d'un mode de pensée et d'une conception de la réalité.[57]

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55 Quintilien (*Ins. Or.* 3, 8, 6 et 36) rappelle que le centre de gravité du discours délibératif tourne autour des *exempla* et que les buts principaux sont la *suasio* et la *dissuasio*.

56 Au fil de sa réflexion, dans les six premiers chapitres, il se rapporte à la fausseté des rites décrits au moyen de termes tels que 2.5 *simulacrum, superstitiones* ou *figmenta* : *frustra tibi hanc aquam colis … Alia est aqua renovati homines renascuntur* ; 2.7 : *Quid errantibus hominibus … de sacris tuis malum monstras ?* ; 2.9 : *Nihil aliud invenis nisi simulacrum quod ipse posuisti* ; 3.4 : *cur huic ordini miserae mortis figmenta quaesita sunt?* ; 6.1 : *Sic sunt sacratissimi imperatores, elementa a perditis hominibus consecrata. Sed adhuc supersunt aliae superstitiones quarum secreta pandenda sunt* (…) *ut et in istis profanis religionibus sciatis mortes esse hominum consecratas.*

57 On trouve de nombreux passages qui montrent des énumérations parallèles et antithétiques, comme par exemple, tout au long des chapitres 18–24. Dans le chapitre 18, 1–2, on compare ce qu'on mange et boit au cours d'un culte décrit d'un façon très générique avec

Dans ce que nous avons considéré être la seconde partie, se met en place, avec la présentation dichotomique en question, un autre recours dont se nourrit l'argumentation de la troisième partie : la recherche de similarités entre l'Ancien et le Nouveau Testament pour prouver la véracité du message salvateur annoncé par le Christ. S'il est vrai que dans les deux premières parties la narration descriptive suivie d'une réflexion de caractère critique-exhortatif prédomine, dans la troisième partie, c'est le style doctrinal basé sur l'autorité de la Bible qui domine. C'est ce que fait remarquer Firmicus à la fin du chapitre 24, pour annoncer le début de la troisième partie (24, 9) :

> *Hi sunt inimici dei, sacratissimi imperatores, qui veritatis ordinem contraria lege conturbant … In isto loco positi ordinem debemus sanctae dispositionis aperire ut quicquit nobis investigantibus sanctum dei verbum prophetica tradidit disciplina ad refutandas profani erroris maculas specialiter explicetur … Suspensis itaque paululum ceteris ad haec explicanda quae vera sunt transferatur oratio.*

Bien que l'argumentation soit principalement inductive et qu'elle s'appuie sur des descriptions et des faits tirés de la réalité, accompagnés d'une réflexion à leur sujet, ainsi que sur leur interprétation, Firmicus recourt au raisonnement syllogistique à certains endroits. C'est le cas de 5,4 où, après avoir décrit certaines pratiques religieuses des Perses, il réfléchit sur le culte d'Hécate et les propriétés attribuées à diverses parties de son corps, de la manière suivante (5, 4) : *Quid ergo perficiat ista divisio diligenter aspicite, ut facile commentum ratio veritatis inpugnet … Animam ergo separatio ista dissolvit … Omne enim quod potest dividi corpus est. Corpus autem necesse est esse mortale. Ergo si anima dividitur corpus est. Si corpus est, necesse est sit etiam ipsa mortalis. Egregia erroris istius ac praeclara comenta !*

En général, Maternus fonde sa stratégie argumentative autour de deux axes : le raisonnement inductif à travers la narration de *facta*, réels et mythologiques, la réflexion de caractère exhortatif qui en découle, et l'utilisation du texte biblique invoqué comme autorité suprême et signe de réalités plus profondes. Cette dernière démarche est largement développée dans la troisième et der-

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le pain et le vin eucharistiques : *Male miser homo de admisso facinore confiteris. Pestiferum veneni virus hausisti et nefarii furoris instinctu letale poculum lambis. Cibum istum mors sequitur semper et poena. Hoc quod bibisse te praedicas, vitalem venam stringit in mortem et sedes a nimiae contaminata malorum continuatione conturbat. Alius est cibus qui salutem largitur et vitam, alius est cibus* … Dans les chapitres suivants, il présente des éléments ou signes tels que la lumière, la pierre, le serpent, etc.

nière section du traité. Cette section s'attache à découvrir et à commenter les similarités existantes entre l'Ancien et le Nouveau Testament sur l'histoire du salut incarné par Jésus-Christ. Le langage conçu comme signe de réalités profondes et l'interprétation allégorique basée sur cette conception concourent à former l'instrument fondamental de la troisième et dernière partie.

5 Conclusions

L'analyse du premier livre de l'*Adversus nationes* d'Arnobe et du *De errore* de Firmicus Maternus s'est révélée utile, non seulement pour souligner le caractère divers des deux apologies, mais également pour corroborer certaines hypothèses relatives aux dates de composition de chacune d'entre elles. Ces deux œuvres ont été considérées comme des illustrations de la nouvelle orientation des œuvres apologétiques à partir de l'Édit de Milan : les défenses du christianisme se sont alors transformées, principalement, en attaques contre les cultes païens qui persistaient avec force. Bien que cette appréciation soit en grande partie juste, la prise en compte du contexte politico-idéologique et social qui a vu naître chacune d'entre elles, tout comme de l'objectif prioritaire qui, à chaque fois, a guidé les auteurs, ainsi que du type de récepteur qu'ils visaient, entraîne un mode spécifique d'argumentation pour chaque œuvre.

Au sujet d'Arnobe, nous nous sommes centrés sur l'argumentation développée dans le premier livre en tenant compte de son caractère « achevé » (Le Bonniec 1982 : 25) et de l'hypothèse de la composition en distinctes phases des livres I–II et du bloc III–VII (vid. *supra*). La stratégie argumentative adoptée par l'auteur est conditionnée par la finalité visée par ce texte : réfuter l'accusation selon laquelle les chrétiens étaient les responsables des maux soufferts par le monde, ainsi que l'impiété supposée de leur culte. Pour cela, Arnobe développe une argumentation en puisant dans les recours en usage chez les défenseurs du paganisme savant, c'est-à-dire des procédés dialectiques-rhétoriques renforcés par un style imprégné d'ironie et d'autres figures rhétoriques. Étant donné que les récepteurs sont surtout les représentants du paganisme savant, il ne faut pas s'étonner de l'absence presque totale de références bibliques. Il n'invoque en effet comme témoignages à valeur de preuves que les faits attribués au Christ et à ses disciples, ou encore sa propre conversion : des faits auxquels leur caractère de témoignages vécus confère un degré de véracité supérieur à la mention d'une autorité inconnue ou méprisée par les récepteurs en question. En dernier lieu, le ton ironique de ce livre est encore loin de l'agressivité qui caractérise l'attaque contre les cultes païens des livres III–VII. Par contre, cette véhémence

définit l'œuvre de Firmicus Maternus. Son argumentation est bien différente de celle du premier livre de *l'Adversus nationes*. Comme nous l'avons signalé, l'évolution du cadre politico-religieux, les intentions différentes des auteurs et les objectifs qu'ils se donnent, conditionnent la stratégie argumentative mise en œuvre.

CHAPTER 4

Image and Word in Eusebius of Caesarea (*VC* 3.4–24): Constantine in Nicaea*

José B. Torres Guerra

1 Approach

The bibliography tends to emphasize the important role that images and signs play in the *Life of Constantine* [*Vita Constantini* = *VC*] by Eusebius of Caesarea. This is an issue highlighted by Cameron, for example, in the final years of the 20th century.[1] Later, Van Nuffelen (2013) returned to the topic with an article focused on the role of the image in the preface to the *VC* (1.1–11);[2] as he indicates, the introductory section of the encomium brings up issues regarding the image that are essential for the interpretation of the overall work. Van Nuffelen's article (2013: 133) reminds the reader that we have no complete study that analyses the prominent role that the bishop of Caesarea grants to images in his panegyric to the Emperor. The present work does not seek to fill such a gap. Rather, it seeks to analyze the connection between word and image in a passage of the *VC* that is of great historical relevance despite its inaccuracies: the account that Eusebius gives of the Council of Nicaea (3.4–24).[3] This passage

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1 Cameron (1991: 61–64; 1997: 162). Because it has a relationship with this issue, it is worth noting that the bibliography at the end of the 20th century recognized the central role of the portrait or image of the person in Late Antiquity; as an introduction, cf. Francis (2003: 575–576).

2 Regarding the preface, cf. also Cameron and Hall (1999: 27–30, 183–192); Bleckmann and Schneider (2007: 16, 140–159).

3 Eusebius, in narrating the events of the Council, focused on the debate about the date of Easter, a topic that he had already written about (*VC* 4.34; Cameron and Hall 1999: 326; Markschies 2000: 163–164), and does not speak about the Christological debates that made up the nucleus of the controversy (the discussion about whether Jesus, God the Son, is or is not consubstantial—ὁμοούσιος—with the Father) for two possible reasons: in order to not emphasize negative aspects in an encomium (Bleckmann and Schneider 2007: 86) and because Eusebius himself must have felt involved due to his sympathy for the theses of Arius

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will be read in the light of the preliminary considerations about image and word present in the preface to the encomium. Before beginning the analysis certain questions must be answered regarding what the word "images" means in the context of the *VC*.[4]

2 Εἰκόνες and Images

In the third chapter of the first book of the panegyric to Constantine, Eusebius reports that men have attempted to honor the memory of their ancestors with the dedication of images (*VC* 1.3.2: εἰκόνων ἀναθήμασι). This is the first occasion in the book where the term εἰκών appears, the Greek word habitually used to designate an "image".[5] Nevertheless, this noun does not exhaust the field of what can be considered an "image" in Eusebius's work. Still without discussing material images[6] as in the case of εἰκόνων ἀναθήμασι, and without even employing the word εἰκών, Eusebius had already alluded, prior to this passage, to the visual perception of realities that impose their stamp on the orator and his potential public (*VC* 1.1.2–3):

> νυνὶ δ' ὁ λόγος ἡμῖν ἀμηχανῶν ἕστηκε, (…) μόνῳ τε τῷ θαύματι τῆς ξενιζούσης ὄψεως καταπεπληγμένος. ὅπῃ γὰρ ἀτενὲς ἐμβλέψειεν (…), πάντῃ καὶ πανταχοῦ τὸν μακάριον αὐτῇ συνόντα βασιλείᾳ θεωρεῖ. γῆς μὲν γὰρ τοὺς αὐτοῦ παῖδας οἷά τινας νέους λαμπτῆρας τῶν αὐτοῦ μαρμαρυγῶν συνορᾷ πληροῦντας τὸ πᾶν, αὐτόν τε ζῶντα δυνάμει καὶ τὸν σύμπαντα διακυβερνῶντα βίον κρειττόνως ἢ πρόσθεν τῇ τῶν παίδων πολυπλασιασθέντα διαδοχῇ.

> But today our thought stands helpless (…), stunned by the sheer wonder of the amazing spectacle. Wherever it casts its gaze (…), every way and

(n. 13). Eusebius silences fundamental documents such as Constantine's *Letter to the Church of Nicomedia* (Opitz 1934: 58–62) and his *Letter to Arius and his followers* (Opitz 1934: 69–75).

4 Regarding this issue, Van Nuffelen (2013: 134). One can also compare the efforts of Stewart (2003: 19–45) in defining what a statue is before beginning his study of statues in Roman society; regarding Greek terminology for statues, Stewart (2003: 25–27).

5 εἰκών is later repeated on twenty occasions in the *VC*: 1.5.1, 1.8.4, 1.10.1, 1.30, 1.31.2, 1.40.2; 3.3.3 (×2), 3.4, 3.7.2, 3.15.2, 3.27, 3.47.3, 3.60.4; 4.15.1, 4.15.2, 4.16.1, 4.50, 4.69.2, 4.72.

6 We should keep in mind that Eusebius did not favour the use of material images in the realm of the sacred. Cf. Van Nuffelen (2013: 143–145), who deals with the bishop's *Letter to Constantia*; see also Eus., *HE* 7.18.

> everywhere it observes the Blessed One present with the Empire itself. On earth it perceives his own sons like new lamps filling the whole with his radiance, and himself powerfully alive and directing the whole government of affairs more firmly than before, as he is multiplied in the succession of his sons.[7]

The reference to the vision (ὄψεως) that causes astonishment and shocks Eusebius' λόγος (reason)[8] introduces the idea of "image" into the text. Even though this vision is not material, the author multiplies and diversifies the verbs that indicate sense and visual perception: ἐμβλέψειεν (…) θεωρεῖ (…) συνορᾷ. The image that he discusses in 1.1.2–3 is really a symbolic vision: according to the author, wherever he directs his gaze he looks upon the deceased emperor. In a paradoxical way Constantine, once dead, has become ubiquitous through his images, i.e. those of a material character present throughout the Empire, and through his sons, seen by Eusebius as icons that make their father present and that, like their father, share a feature repeatedly emphasized in the work, that of luminosity.[9] Thus the author speaks of them as "like new lamps filling the whole [earth] with their radiance". Even more, the introductory chapters themselves speak of the emperor as being constituted by God as an image (εἰκόνα) of his monarchic power (*VC* 1.5.1):[10] τῆς δ' αὐτοῦ μοναρχικῆς ἐξουσίας τὴν εἰκόνα δούς, νικητὴν ἀπέδειξε παντὸς τυραννικοῦ γένους θεομάχων τ' ὀλετῆρα γιγάντων, οἳ ψυχῆς ἀπονοίᾳ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἤραντο τὸν παμβασιλέα τῶν ὅλων δυσσεβείας ὅπλα ("Making him the image of his own monarchical reign, he [God] appointed him victor over the whole race of tyrants and destroyer of the God-battling giants, who in mental frenzy raised weapons against the Sovereign of the universe himself").

The observations proposed in this section seek to show that a discussion about images in the *VC* must go beyond material representations and take into

7 The translations of passages from the *VC* are (with slight modifications) those of Cameron and Hall (1999). Concerning this passage of the *VC*, see Van Nuffelen (2013: 134–135).

8 Cameron and Hall (1999: 184).

9 In relation to that concept as employed in this passage, see Cameron and Hall (1999: 184); Tantillo (2003a: 48); Van Nuffelen (2013: 142); see also below (§ 3) the analysis of 3.10.3–5. Regarding the fiction that Constantine is still alive in his images, understanding his sons as being images as well, see Bleckmann and Schneider (2007: 35–36); Barnes (2011: 167); Van Nuffelen (2013: 136). We should not lose sight of the fact that the association of Constantine with light and the Sun has a long pagan tradition behind it, the analysis of which would go beyond the limits of this article; see Tantillo (2003a; 2003b).

10 Cameron and Hall (1999: 187). Van Nuffelen (2013: 136, 146) emphasizes the fact that Eusebius presents Constantine not as an image of God but rather of his royal power.

consideration the symbols and signs (σημεῖα) employed in the work.[11] It is not easy to establish a clear and closed corpus of what should be catalogued as images in the *VC*. Nonetheless, it can be assumed that the text of Eusebius provides sufficient clues to indicate when the author is appealing to the visual perception of the reader, whether it be in a sensible or strictly intellectual manner, as in the two cases just commented on (1.1.2–3; 1.5.1). The following section will identify, in the account of the Council, a series of passages in which one can recognize the presence of images in accordance with the outlined concept.

3 Imperial Images: Regarding the Council

In the first section of this study it was said that the account of the Nicaean Council occupies the fourth through the twenty-fourth chapters of the third book of the *VC*.[12] However, this portion of the text is integrated within a longer section, occupying part of both the second and third books (2.61–3.24), where the Arian and Meletian controversies are discussed, along with the concern that they aroused in the Emperor and his efforts to find a solution.[13] At the beginning of the third book Eusebius alludes to the effects of envy (φθόνος, 3.1.1)[14] in the empire of Constantine, and establishes a contrast between the lat-

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11 The term σημεῖον is attested on twenty-one occasions: 1.29.1 (×2), 1.30, 1.31.3, 1.32.2 (×2), 1.37.1, 1.40.1 (×2), 1.40.2; 2.3.2, 2.5.2, 2.8.1 (×2), 2.9.1 (×2), 2.16.2; 3.3.1 (×2), 3.60.9; 4.9. See also the epigraphs of the chapters 1.29–31; 2.7, 2.55; 3.2, 3.49; 4.5, 4.21. In contrast, the term σύμβολον only appears on one occasion (4.45.3).

12 After the apparent parenthesis in 3.1–3 (see *infra*), Eusebius shifts to describing Constantine's concern for the Church (3.4–5). There follows an account of the convocation of the Council (3.6–9), of its development (3.10–14), and of the celebration of the synod and the *uicennalia* of the monarch (3.15–16). Eusebius later presents a letter from the emperor concerning the Council (3.17–20). After its conclusion (3.21–22), in 3.23–24 he focuses on the resurgence of the disputes and of the new positions adopted.

13 Eusebius first speaks of the origin of the two controversies, the riots and the concerns of Constantine (2.61–63). Next, he presents a letter from the emperor to Alexander and Arius (2.64–72). The second book concludes by speaking of the insufficiency of this letter and the intervention of Hosius (2.73). Concerning the Arian question and the postures of Constantine and Eusebius, see Dörries (1954); Barnes (1981: 202–206, 215–217, 229–233, 238–239, 241–242; 2011: 116–117, 120–122, 140–142); Hanson (1988), Elliott (1996); Markschies (2000); Löhr (2005–2006). Concerning Meletianism, see Barnes (1981: 201–202, 217).

14 See Cameron and Hall (1999: 254); Van Nuffelen (2004: 299–302). The motif of envy makes its first appearance, within the account of the controversy, in 2.61.3; previously, regarding

ter's attitude and that of Licinius, his rival, without ever mentioning him.[15] This veiled comparison culminates in 3.2.2 just before he begins the account of the Council, in a reference to the fact that the Emperor did not conceal his sympathies for the Christian religion.[16] Eusebius emphasized that the favourable attitude of the Augustus also implied his public adoption of Christian symbols, especially the sign of the cross (3.2.2–3.3.1): φανερὸν ἑαυτὸν καθίστη, νῦν μὲν τὸ πρόσωπον τῷ σωτηρίῳ κατασφραγιζόμενος σημείῳ, νῦν δ' ἐναβρυνόμενος τῷ νικητικῷ τροπαίῳ ("He made himself quite plain, at one time marking his face with the sign of the Saviour, at another proudly delighting in the trophy of victory").[17] As Van Nuffelen (2013: 140–141, 145) indicates, these gestures and signs displayed by the emperor were important for Eusebius' argumentation, serving as a proof of Constantine's "Christianity of desire".[18]

The preference of the emperor for the symbol that he supposedly saw before the battle of Milvian Bridge[19] induced him to include the cross in a painting that was on exhibition in Constantinople, in a place as important as the door to the imperial palace.[20] Eusebius offers an ἔκφρασις of this image after the text I have

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the Donatists, see 1.45.3; the text speaks equally of other people's envy of Constantine (1.20.1, 49.2; 4.54.3) and of various Church-related disputes (3.59.1; 4.41.1).

15 Licinius shared (313–324) the title of Augustus with Constantine, with whom he struggled for supreme power; Eusebius (*VC* 1.51–56; 2.1–5) presents him as being hostile towards Christianity, which is not entirely correct (Barnes 1981: 70–72, 209–210; 2011: 93–97, 105–108). The fact that Licinius's name is not mentioned is due not to a *damnatio memoriae* but rather to the observance of the norms of βασιλικὸς λόγος, in which only the person being praised is given prominence; see Cameron and Hall (1999: 33).

16 *VC* 3.2.2: τοιγάρτοι τὸν Χριστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ σὺν παρρησίᾳ τῇ πάσῃ πρεσβεύων εἰς πάντας διετέλει, μηδὲν ἐγκαλυπτόμενος τὴν σωτήριον ἐπηγορίαν, σεμνολογούμενος δ' ἐπὶ τῷ πράγματι ("he continually announced the Christ of God with complete openness to all, in no way concealing the saving title").

17 See Cameron and Hall (1999: 255). Bleckmann and Schneider (2007: 310) observe that it is not quite sure that the text indicates that Constantine had the custom of making the sign of the cross.

18 It should be remembered that Constantine was only baptised just before he died (*VC* 4.61–64). See also Cameron and Hall (1999: 42, 340–341); Bleckmann and Schneider (2007: 91–94, 482–489).

19 The vision is the topic of *VC* 1.28–31. Among the abundant bibliography on this topic, see at least, from diverse points of view, Cameron and Hall (1999: 204–206); Bremmer (2006); Bleckmann and Schneider (2007: 54–61); Barnes (2011: 74–80).

20 It is generally thought (Cameron and Hall 1999: 255; Bleckmann and Schneider 2007: 310) that the painting was hanging over the so-called Bronze Gate. Eusebius emphasizes that that location allows everyone to contemplate it (*VC* 3.31): τοῖς πάντων ὀφθαλμοῖς ὁρᾶσθαι ("for the eyes of all to see").

just commented on, at the beginning of the third book (3.3) but prior to the section that deals specifically with the Council.[21] Following the order of presentation in the *VC* one must note, first, that the painting represented the emperor with the symbol of the cross over his head: τὸ (…) σωτήριον σημεῖον ὑπερκείμενον τῆς αὐτοῦ κεφαλῆς ("the (…) sign of the Saviour placed over his head"). The same picture presented the hostile forces that had besieged the Church to materialize in the form of a serpent (3.3.1): τὸν δ' ἐχθρὸν καὶ πολέμιον θῆρα τὸν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ διὰ τῆς τῶν ἀθέων πολιορκήσαντα τυραννίδος κατὰ βυθοῦ φερόμενον ποιήσας ἐν δράκοντος μορφῇ ("The hostile and inimical beast, which had laid siege to the Church of God through the tyranny of the godless, he made in the form of a dragon borne down to the deep"). In Eusebius's interpretation, the painting clearly indicated that the victory over the beast, which symbolized Licinius or paganism in general,[22] had been achieved through the mediation of the cross; at this point (3.3.2) the narrator again refers to it, employing two characteristic terms, τρόπαιον and σωτήριος, now in agreement: διὸ καὶ βασιλεὺς (…) διὰ τῆς κηροχύτου γραφῆς ἐδείκνυ τοῖς πᾶσι τὸν δράκοντα, ὧδέ πῃ τὸν ἀφανῆ τοῦ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένους πολέμιον αἰνιττόμενος, ὃν καὶ δυνάμει τοῦ ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς ἀνακειμένου σωτηρίου τροπαίου κατὰ βυθῶν ἀπωλείας κεχωρηκέναι ἐδήλου ("Therefore the Emperor also (…) showed the dragon to all, through the medium of the encaustic painting. In this way he indicated the invisible enemy of the human race, whom he showed also to have departed to the depths of destruction by the power of the Saviour's trophy which was set up over his head").

It is important to note that the responsibility for the design of the painting was attributed, in these sentences, to the Emperor himself, who is thus presented as a creator of images; even more, it was divine inspiration that moved him, which provoked the astonishment of the panegyrist, who now introduces (3.3.3) himself in first person: ἐμὲ δὲ θαῦμα τῆς βασιλέως κατεῖχε μεγαλονοίας, ὡς ἐμπνεύσει θείᾳ ταῦτα διετύπου ("I was filled with wonder at the high-mindedness of the Emperor, and at the way he had by divine inspiration portrayed this"). ταῦτα, "this", is what had already been proclaimed by the voices of the prophets

21 Cameron and Hall (1999: 255–256). The *VC* also includes *ekphraseis* of other artistic works (architectonic) in 3.25–53 (various churches constructed on Constantine's orders) and 4.58–60 (the mausoleum of the Emperor in Constantinople); see Elsner (2002: 4 and 16, n. 26). Concerning ἔκφρασις in general, see Elsner (2002); Webb (1997; 1999; 2009).

22 About Licinius's hostility towards Christianity, according to Eusebius, see n. 15. Licinius had already been (*VC* 2.46.2) identified with the snake in a letter sent by the Emperor to the bishop. Concerning a possible pagan interpretation of the snake symbol in the art and coinage of the era, see López Sánchez (2007; 2016).

(φωναὶ προφητῶν), specifically by Isaiah, and he cites a verse of this prophet (27.1) that announces the death of the beast. It should be noted that here Eusebius once again takes up the key issue presented repeatedly in the preface, i.e. the relation between word and image.[23] The passage concludes by noting, as a final closure, that the painting hanging in front of the imperial palace achieves the ideal objective of being a true image, insofar as it imitates reality properly: εἰκόνας δὴ τούτων διετύπου βασιλεύς, ἀληθῶς ἐντιθεὶς μιμήματα τῇ σκιαγραφίᾳ ("The Emperor certainly had images created of this [what had been prophesied by Isaiah], working true representations in pictorial art").[24] In 3.3.3, certainly, the word εἰκών is attested twice, which is unique in the *VC*.[25]

It might seem that the three initial chapters of the third book of the *VC* introduce a twist in the argument of the encomium, which no longer speaks, as at the end of book two, of the theological dissension that the Augustus had to confront.[26] Notwithstanding this, the three chapters are anchored to their contexts, above all by the initial reference to the key motif of envy (3.1.1), which connects with what was noted in the second book about the conflicts caused by Meletians and Arians.[27] In a proleptic key, what is said in 3.1–3 about Constantine as a model of piety—in contrast to the persecutors of the Church—also anticipates his role in the Eusebian account of the Council. Furthermore, this conceptual image of the emperor expresses itself in the material reality of the painting discussed in 3.3. All of this prepares the recipients of the text for the narration of the Council given in 3.4–24.

Section 3.4 takes up the earlier topic again, and emphasizes the involvement of Constantine in the events, noting that the Emperor put into practice what had been decided earlier in his spirit.[28] Again, there is an allusion to envy, or, more specifically, to the malignancy of envy (τῆς τοῦ φθόνου βασκανίας) which harms the peace of Alexandria and Egypt[29] and leads the rebel to affront

23 Van Nuffelen (2013: 137–138).

24 Regarding the contrast between true and false images in the *VC* and in relation to this painting, see Van Nuffelen (2013: 142).

25 See n. 5.

26 See the summary of 2.61–73 and 3.4–24 in notes 12 and 13. See also Cameron and Hall (1999: 253–254).

27 See n. 12, and Cameron and Hall (1999: 248–249).

28 *VC* 3.4.1: Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν αὐτῷ καταθυμίως συνετελεῖτο ("These things then were done according to his spirit").

29 Arius was a priest in Alexandria. Meletius, founder of Meletianism, was the bishop of Lycopolis, also in Egypt; the influence of his schism was felt above all in this region. See n. 13.

even that which was just discussed in 3.3, namely the images (εἰκόσιν) of the Emperor,[30] without it angering him, he being concerned only with the fact that their deeds were leading them astray.[31]

In the chapters dedicated specifically to the narration of the Council, the term εἰκών was repeated on another two occasions, although in neither is there any reference to material representations. In the first case (3.7.2) a mention is found in the narrative about how the bishops congregated in Nicaea after the convocation of the meeting,[32] themselves constituting a wreath that Constantine offers, in an act of thanksgiving, to Christ the Saviour, εἰκόνα χορείας ἀποστολικῆς ταύτην καθ' ἡμᾶς συστησάμενος ("gathering among us this replica of the apostolic assembly").

The second example of εἰκών appears in the account of the warm reception that the Emperor offers to the bishops after the deliberations of the assembly, and on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of his rule (3.15.2):[33]

> κρεῖττον δ' ἦν παντὸς λόγου τὸ γιγνόμενον· δορυφόροι μὲν γὰρ καὶ ὁπλῖται γυμναῖς ταῖς τῶν ξιφῶν ἀκμαῖς ἐν κύκλῳ τὰ πρόθυρα τῶν βασιλείων ἐφρούρουν, μέσοι δὲ τούτων ἀδεεῖς οἱ τοῦ θεοῦ διέβαινον ἄνθρωποι ἐνδοτάτω τ' ἀνακτόρων ἐχώρουν. εἶθ' οἱ μὲν αὐτῷ συνανεκλίνοντο, οἱ δ' ἀμφὶ τὰς ἑκατέρων προσανεπαύοντο κλινάδας. Χριστοῦ βασιλείας ἔδοξεν ἄν τις φαντασιοῦσθαι εἰκόνα, ὄναρ τ' εἶναι ἀλλ' οὐχ ὕπαρ τὸ γιγνόμενον.
>
> The event was beyond all description. Guards and soldiers ringed the entrance to the palace, guarding it with drawn swords, and between these

30 Cameron and Hall (1999: 258–259). In the opinion of, among others, John of Damascus (*Imag.* 2.61), an offence to the image implied an offence to the dignity of the one represented. Concerning the destruction of statues as a case of iconoclasm and the *damnatio memoriae* in the Empire, see Stewart (2003: 267–299).

31 *VC* 3.4.1: ἤδη φρενῶν ἐκστάσει τοὺς ἀπεγνωσμένους (...) ταῖς βασιλέως τολμᾶν ἐνυβρίζειν εἰκόσιν, οὐ μὴν ὥστ' εἰς ὀργὴν ἐγείρειν τὸν βασιλέα μᾶλλον ἢ πρὸς πόνον ψυχῆς, ὑπεραλγοῦντα τῆς τῶν φρενοβλαβῶν ἀπονοίας ("Desperate men, out of their minds ..., even daring to insult the images of the Emperor. But this did not so much rouse him to anger as to mental anguish, as he grieved at the senseless conduct of the deranged").

32 According to the testimony of the *VC* (3.6.1), it was the Emperor himself that convoked the Council. Concerning Constantine as bishop and his place amongst all the bishops, see *VC* 1.44.1–2 and 4.24; see also Rapp (1998) and Bremmer (2006: 71–72).

33 Cameron and Hall (1999: 267). Eusebius makes the success of the Council and the Imperial celebration coincide with a clear political meaning. On this topic, see Markschies (2000: 193).

> the men of God passed fearlessly, and entered the innermost royal courts. Some then reclined with him, others relaxed nearby on couches on either side. It might have been supposed that it was an imaginary representation of the kingdom of Christ, and that what was happening was 'dream, not fact' [Hom., *Od.* 19,547].

It is important to note that this passage opens with the use of another motif, mentioned in the preface to the work, and present in several passages in the text:[34] the limitation of the word, unable to express in a proper manner all that occurred during the celebration. In the preface (1.2.3) Eusebius had referred to the limitation of the human λόγος, contrasting it with the divine and unlimited Λόγος, second person of the Trinity: ἀχανὴς ἕστηκεν οἷα θνητὸς λόγος, μηδεμίαν μὲν ἀφιεὶς φωνὴν τῆς δ' αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ κατεγνωκὼς ἀσθενείας, καὶ δὴ σιωπὴν καθ' ἑαυτοῦ ψηφισάμενος τῷ κρείττονι καὶ καθόλου λόγῳ παραχωρεῖ τυγχάνειν τῆς τῶν ἐφαμίλλων ὕμνων ἀξίας ("The word, being mortal, has become mute—uttering not a sound, self-convicted of impotence, condemning itself to silence—and concedes to the superior and universal Word the right to utter worthy praises").[35]

When confronted by this limitation Eusebius recognizes, in accordance with a concept recurrent in his era, that the image has a singular value which, despite having its own limitations, can attain to places not reachable by the human word.[36] It is, therefore, worth remembering what the panegyrist says, he who at one moment employs the rhetorical motif of the modesty of the orator,[37] and at another place within the preface states (1.10.1): 'Εμοὶ δ' εἰ καὶ τὸ λέγειν ἐπάξιόν τι τῆς τοῦ ἀνδρὸς μακαριότητος ἄπορον τυγχάνει (…), ὅμως ἀναγκαῖον μιμήσει τῆς θνητῆς σκιαγραφίας τὴν διὰ λόγων εἰκόνα τῇ τοῦ θεοφιλοῦς ἀναθεῖναι μνήμῃ, "As for me, even though to say anything worthy of the blessedness of the man [Constantine] is beyond my power (…), yet one must model oneself on human shadow painting, and dedicate a verbal portrait in memory of the God-beloved". In this way Eusebius proposes in the preface to resolve the impotence

34 Cameron and Hall (1999: 267). Apart from the passages of the *VC* commented upon in this article, see 3.20.3, 3.30.1–2, 3.40, 3.64.3, 4.35.1–3.

35 Cameron and Hall (1999: 267); Van Nuffelen (2013: 135–137).

36 Elsner (1998: 11–14; 2007: 22–26). The limits of the image depend on the type of reality that it attempts to reproduce, material or spiritual; concerning this idea in the *VC*, see Van Nuffelen (2013: 144–145).

37 Van Nuffelen (2013: 138), who emphasizes that Eusebius's approach exceeds the rhetorical motif; Van Nuffelen (2013: 138, n. 20) also includes a listing of the loci in which the motif of the modesty of the author is repeated in the *VC*.

of his word by an imitation of the plastic arts, developing a verbal image, and reminds the reader that the *VC* is precisely a διὰ λόγων εἰκών.[38]

In a comparable way, in the passage now being commented on (3.15.2), Eusebius apologizes for the limits of his words ("The event was beyond all description") saying that the meeting that he is attempting to paint is, in reality, nothing less than an "image [εἰκόνα] of the kingdom of Christ", something that, by its own nature, escapes the human capacity of expression. Even so, the bishop of Caesarea proposes a few brief sketches, through which he is able, despite his protests of incapacity, to achieve an image of the meeting that has visual impact, as though it was a matter of rendering something like a *tableau vivant*:[39] for that purpose he first presents the imperial guard in formation in front of the palace with their swords unsheathed, in a theatrical gesture.[40] On the other hand, Eusebius gives the painting a spatial dimension, in referring to a geometric detail: the soldiers' formation is circular; in the same way, one notes his allusion to the movement of the bishops, passing through the guards, into the interior of the palace, or the precision, newly spatial, with which some of the bishops occupy their places on the same *triclinium* as the Emperor, while the rest of them form two groups, to one side or another of his couch.

Eusebius achieves the desired effect for the scene by employing a type of ἔκφρασις identified by the *progymnasmata* handbooks of Antiquity, the ἔκφρασις of events.[41] He further develops it by applying—in an emphatic form—the procedure of ἐνάργεια, *enargeia* in Latin, termed by Cicero *inlustratio* or *euidentia*, as Quintilian comments.[42] In the words of Webb (2009: 105), this has as its

38 Cameron and Hall (1999: 190); Van Nuffelen (2013: 136–137, 138).

39 MacMullen (1964: 436–438) speaks of a "*tableau vivant*" in relation to certain passages of Ammianus Marcellinus, another historian of the fourth century whose theatricality has been highlighted by the secondary literature; see Auerbach (1946: 53–62); Jenkins (1987).

40 The reference to the distribution of the guard fulfils a unique function in the account at 3.15.2. In contrast, the allusion to the absence of hoplites and lancers in Constantine's entourage is also functional, in an opposite sense, in the narrative of 3.10.2; see *infra*.

41 Theon, *Prog.* 118 7–9 (7–8 Patillon-Bolognesi): Ἔκφρασις ἐστὶ λόγος περιηγηματικὸς ἐναργῶς ὑπ' ὄψιν ἄγων τὸ δηλούμενον. γίνεται δὲ ἔκφρασις προσώπων τε καὶ πραγμάτων καὶ τόπων καὶ χρόνων ("*Ekphrasis* is a descriptive discourse that brings into view, in an evident manner, that which is being shown. There is an *ekphrasis* of persons and events, of places and times") (author's translation). See also Webb (1999: 11–15).

42 Quint., *Inst. Orat.* 6.2.32; in relation to *enargeia*, cf. also 8.3.61–62, 9.2.40. Concerning the references to the procedure amongst the Greek authors, see Quiroga Puertas (2016); as this work indicates, Lucian (*Hist. Cons.* 51) practically proposes a definition of ἐνάργεια: ὅταν

objective "the capacity to visualize a scene", to use words in such a way that the recipient of a discourse or text experiences the illusion of being a witness to the scene just described.[43] According to the same author (Webb 1997: 248), "l'enargeia verbale (…) fonctionne en imitant la perception même. Plutôt que faire voir une illusion, elle crée l'illusion de voir". Van Nuffelen (2013: 139) notes that it cannot be accidental that in the preface of the *VC* the bishop of Caesarea twice employs the adjective ἐναργής, a designation of the "evident": Constantine is, for all men, a visible model of a pious life (1.3.4: ἐναργὲς ἅπασιν ἀνθρώποις παράδειγμα θεοσεβοῦς (…) βίου), as God has confirmed with evident votes (1.4.1: ἐναργέσι ψήφοις ἐπιστώσατο). The same critic comments that Eusebius must have been familiarized with the procedure of ἐνάργεια thanks to his education in rhetoric.[44]

A more notable example of Eusebius's use of ἔκφρασις and *enargeia* is found in a later chapter in the *VC*, in 3.10.3–5, a moment in which the bishop presents, as though it were a painting, Constantine's appearance to the bishops meeting in the Council:

> πάντων δ' ἐξαναστάντων ἐπὶ συνθήματι, ὃ τὴν βασιλέως εἴσοδον ἐδήλου, αὐτὸς δὴ λοιπὸν διέβαινε μέσος οἷα θεοῦ τις οὐράνιος ἄγγελος, λαμπρὰν μὲν ὥσπερ φωτὸς μαρμαρυγαῖς ἐξαστράπτων περιβολήν, ἁλουργίδος δὲ πυρωποῖς καταλαμπόμενος ἀκτῖσι, χρυσοῦ τε καὶ λίθων πολυτελῶν διαυγέσι φέγγεσι κοσμούμενος. ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ἀμφὶ τὸ σῶμα. τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν θεοῦ φόβῳ καὶ εὐλαβείᾳ δῆλος ἦν κεκαλλωπισμένος· ὑπέφαινον δὲ καὶ ταῦτ' ὀφθαλμοὶ κάτω νεύοντες, ἐρύθημα προσώπου, περιπάτου κίνησις, τό τ' ἄλλο εἶδος, τὸ μέγεθός τε ὑπερβάλλον μὲν τοὺς ἀμφ' αὐτὸν ἅπαντας *** τῷ τε κάλλει τῆς ὥρας καὶ τῷ μεγαλοπρεπεῖ τῆς τοῦ σώματος εὐπρεπείας ἀλκῇ τε ῥώμης ἀμάχου, ἃ δὴ τρόπων ἐπιεικείᾳ πραότητί τε βασιλικῆς ἡμερότητος ἐγκεκραμένα τὸ τῆς διανοίας ὑπερφυὲς παντὸς κρεῖττον ἀπέφαινον λόγου.
>
> All rose at a signal, which announced the Emperor's entrance; and he finally walked along between them, like some heavenly angel of God, his

τις ἀκροώμενος οἴηται μετὰ ταῦτα ὁρᾶν τὰ λεγόμενα, "when the one who listens afterwards believes that he sees what has been said" (translation by the author).

43 Van Nuffelen (2013: 139); Quiroga Puertas (2016). Concerning *enargeia* in different genres and eras, see also Zanker (1981); Manieri (1998); Otto (2009); Webb (2009: 87–106); Plett (2012). Regarding the differences existing between the procedures of ἔκφρασις and those of *enargeia*, see Elsner (2002: 1–3); Francis (2003: 579–580); Quiroga Puertas (2016).

44 About Eusebius and rhetoric, see Cameron and Hall (1999: 30–33); Carriker (2003: 137–138, 312–313); Iturralde Mauleón (2014).

> bright mantle shedding lustre like beams of light, shining with the fiery radiance of a purple robe, and decorated with the dazzling brilliance of gold and precious stones. Such was his physical appearance. As for his soul, he was clearly embellished with fear and reverence for God: this was shown by his eyes, which were cast down, the blush on his face, his gait, and the rest of his appearance, his height, which surpassed all those around him *** by his dignified maturity, by the magnificence of his physical condition, and by the vigour of his matchless strength. All these, blended with the elegance of his manners and the gentleness of imperial condescension, demonstrated the superiority of his mind surpassing all description.

As in 3.15.2, this new passage (3.10.3–5) includes basic spatial references in order to orient the reader, such as the detail that all those present stood up when the Emperor arrived, walking among them (μέσος), just as in that same passage one reads that the bishops entered parading between the soldiers (μέσοι).[45] The passage later fixes its attention on the Emperor, emphasizing his physical and spiritual traits;[46] the tone that the description will have in both realms is marked by the initial comparison οἷα θεοῦ τις οὐράνιος ἄγγελος. Eusebius first characterizes him as a "heavenly angel of God", appealing to the sense of sight, to luminosity and colour, as when he says that the Emperor's vestments are so brilliant that they seem to radiate sparks of light, that the dazzling rays of purple illuminate him or that he is adorned by the amazing splendour of gold

45 In order to better understand the "geometry of the synod" it should be remembered that, as Eusebius indicated prior to narrating the entrance of the Emperor (3.10.1–2), footstools were placed on both sides of the principal hall in the palace of Nicaea, βάθρων τ' ἐν τάξει πλειόνων ἐφ' ἑκατέραις τοῦ οἴκου πλευραῖς διατεθέντων ("many tiers of seating had been set along both sides of the hall"). The text emphasizes the idea of order, both in the cited phrase (ἐν τάξει) and immediately afterwards (ὅτε δὴ σὺν κόσμῳ τῷ πρέποντι ἡ πᾶσα καθῆστο σύνοδος: "when the whole Council had with proper ceremony taken their seats"). The fact that the Augustus's appearance precedes the successive entrance of three of his companions emphasizes order and establishes a climax: εἰσῄει δέ τις πρῶτος κἄπειτα δεύτερος καὶ τρίτος τῶν ἀμφὶ βασιλέα ("one of the Emperor's company came in, then a second, then a third"). See Cameron and Hall (1999: 264–265).

46 *VC* 3.10.4: ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ἀμφὶ τὸ σῶμα. τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν … ("Such was his physical appearance. As for his soul …"). It is obvious that Eusebius reformulates—in the entirety of the passage—the rhetorical device classically formulated by Cicero (*Orat.* 18.60): *imago est animi vultus et indices oculi.*

and precious stones.[47] The *VC* has referred to the physical ornamentation of the Emperor, and as a next step, alludes to the "clear" (δῆλος ἦν) fact that his soul is "embellished" (κεκαλλωπισμένος)[48] by two immaterial characteristics, i.e. the fear of God and reverence. If Eusebius integrates these characteristics into his description of Constantine it is on the basis of physical markers that he believes are representative: the Emperor humbly directs his gaze towards the floor, he blushes, walks unhurriedly; in short, his entire appearance (τό τ' ἄλλο εἶδος) lets his good disposition show through.[49] In addition, other physical traits form part of the characterization of the Augustus, which Eusebius adds at the end as a mirror of the Emperor's interior state: his high stature, the fullness of his age, the bearing of his body, his physical vigour, the correctness of his manners and "the gentleness of imperial condescension" (πραότητι (…) βασιλικῆς ἡμερότητος).

The paragraph concludes (3.10.4–5) with a declaration that is notable for its paradoxical character: according to the *VC*, the image of Constantine, developed by Eusebius through verbal means, has more demonstrative capacity than any word: ἃ δὴ (…) τὸ τῆς διανοίας ὑπερφυὲς παντὸς κρεῖττον ἀπέφαινον λόγου ("All these … demonstrated the superiority of his mind, surpassing all description"). This sentence has to be placed in relationship with the passage commented upon earlier (3.15.2), with which this other text contains significant verbal coin-

47 Tantillo (2003a: 53–55), and also what this indicates about the risk of *hybris* involved in comparing the Emperor with an angel of Heaven. But the purple, a clear symbol of imperial dignity, does not cause Constantine to fall into arrogance, according to the bishop's account; in his narration of the death of the Emperor (4.62.5–63.1) the latter says that he renounces the purple in order to put on the white clothes of the recently baptised (Cameron and Hall 1999: 342). In contrast, concerning the pejorative meaning of the allusions to gold and to the purple as part of the adornment of the orators in their public discourses, according to Themistius, Dio of Prusa, Libanius and Synesius, see Quiroga Puertas (2013a: 610–611).

48 Concerning the marked use of the compound ἐγκαλλωπίζομαι in other rhetorical texts from the fourth century (Themistius, Libanius), see Quiroga Puertas (2013a: 607); καλλωπίζομαι, in Eusebius, lacks the ironic connotations present in the examples commented on by Quiroga Puertas (2013a).

49 Regarding the Emperor's traits of humility, recall the fact, indicated previously and in note 40, that Constantine does not present himself before the bishops accompanied (3.10.2) "by the usual soldiers and guards" (τῶν συνήθων ὁπλιτῶν τε καὶ δορυφόρων) but rather by "his faithful friends" (τῶν πιστῶν φίλων). In addition, Eusebius later (3.10.5) refers to the small seat of gold the Emperor sits on after receiving a signal from the bishops, who only sit down after he does; cf. Barnes (1981: 215; 2011: 121).

cidences, which also connect the two loci of book 3 with the preface.[50] It is probable that, by means of the paradox just indicated, Eusebius is hinting proudly that his verbal representation of the scene was highly effective, due to his role as intermediary and his capacity to paint the terrestrial image of an angel of God with words.

4 Disputes, Envies, Communion, Agreement: The "Why" of the Image

This study began by indicating its intention of analysing the connection between word and image in the Eusebian account of the Council of Nicaea. In the preface to the narration of the Council, specifically in 3.3, Eusebius included the ἔκφρασις of a painting, through which he would propose to his readers a conceptual image of Constantine, an image which he would develop later in 3.4–24. In these chapters the term εἰκών appears on two occasions, the second of which (3.15.2) makes reference to Eusebius's description of the reception offered by the Emperor to the bishops, on the occasion of the Council and his *uicennalia*, as if it were an authentic verbal painting presented for the contemplation of the receivers of the work. This same type of image[51] made of words that has rightly employed ἔκφρασις and *enargeia* had already been used at another moment marked in this section. In his account of the opening ceremony of the Council (3.10.3–5), Eusebius concludes by claiming that the "painting" of Constantine that he has just composed supersedes παντὸς (…) λόγου, "any and all description". The importance of the image in the account of the Council is evident, just as its role in the entirety of the *VC* is important, it being a work which its author considers to be an image.[52]

The previous analysis reached this point. In order to understand—in the most fitting way—the function of the image in the account of Nicaea one must also take into consideration a broader context: the entire narrative, before and after the portion dedicated to the Council, in the section that is comprised of chapters 2.61–3.24.[53]

At the beginning of section 3 of this article I mentioned a key, recurrent term in the account: φθόνος, the envy that becomes a principle of dissension in

50 *VC* 3.10.4: τὸ τῆς διανοίας ὑπερφυὲς *παντὸς κρεῖττον ἀπέφαινον λόγου*; *VC* 3.15.2: *κρεῖττον δ' ἦν παντὸς λόγου* τὸ γιγνόμενον. See *supra* 1.2.3: θνητὸς *λόγος* … τῷ *κρείττονι* καὶ καθόλου *λόγῳ* παραχωρεῖ.

51 In this case, the noun εἰκών is not present in the text.

52 See n. 38.

53 See n. 12 and 13.

the Church and, consequently, in the Empire of Constantine. As was indicated then, φθόνος refers—in its first appearance in the section that runs from 2.61 through 3.24, specifically in 2.61.3—to the doctrinal controversies that shook the peace of the Church.[54] At the end of book two (2.73) Eusebius again blames φθόνος for this dissension, associated now with a "malignant demon", a πονηρὸς δαίμων.[55] In 3.1.1 the φθόνος is μισόκαλος, "hater of Good".[56] And in 3.4.1 the author speaks, as I have already noted in section 3, of "the resentment of Envy" that fills the churches of Alexandria and Egypt with quarrels.

Concerning these allusions to envy in the passage of 2.61–3.24, they always appear in the mouth of the narrator, never on the lips of Constantine, who takes his turn to speak in this part of the *VC*, in two documents that Eusebius cites as testimony: the letter sent from Constantine to Alexander and Arius (2.64–72) and the letter written to the churches on the occasion of the Council (3.17–19).[57] The idea that there exists a principle of disunity that disturbs the peace of the Church and of the Empire also appears in those documents, but its verbal expression is different. In those loci Constantine does not speak of φθόνος but rather of φιλονεικία, the "dispute" or "rivalry" that arises with the most trivial excuse and sets the people affected in conflict with one another.[58] The noun in question (or the verb φιλονεικέω) appears a total of eight times in the first letter, while φιλονεικία is only attested once (3.23) in the mouth of the narrator.[59] On the other hand, the principle that disturbs the peace can also be διαφωνία, "discord" or "disagreement", a word that is documented on four occasions, three in the mouth of Constantine (on one of the occasions the verb

54 See n. 14. The Greek ecclesiastical historians referred habitually to the φθόνος in order to explain the dissension within the Church: Van Nuffelen (2004: 299–302).

55 *VC* 2.73.1: ταῦτα μὲν οὖν φθόνος τις καὶ πονηρὸς δαίμων τοῖς τῆς ἐκκλησίας βασκαίνων ἀγαθοῖς κατειργάζετο ("This then was the effect of jealous Envy and a malignant demon resenting the prosperity of the churches"). In regards to the evil δαίμων, see also 3.12.2 (φιλοπόνηρος δαίμων, "malignity-loving demon").

56 Concerning μισόκαλος, see Bartelink (1958).

57 It is a distinctive trait of the *VC*, as also of the *Ecclesiastical History* and, in general, of the historiographic method of Eusebius, that he continually refers to and cites documents of diverse kinds, many of them letters. For the case of the *Ecclesiastical History*, see Torres Guerra (2016).

58 E.g. *VC* 2.68.2: εὐτελὴς καὶ οὐδαμῶς ἀξία τῆς τοσαύτης φιλονεικίας ἡ πρόφασις ἐφωράθη ("the cause was exposed as extremely trivial and quite unworthy of so much controversy"). See also 2.70, 2.71.1, 2.71.3 (×2), 2.71.5, 2.72.1, 2.72.3, 3.23.

59 See 2.68.2, 2.70, 2.71.1 (-έω), 2.71.3 (×2, ×1 -έω), 2.71.5, 2.72.1, 2.72.3; 3.23. About the use of φιλονεικία in Sozomen's *Ecclesiastical History*, see Eucken (2001) and Quiroga Puertas (2015: 114).

διαφωνέω appears) and one in the narrative parts of the text.[60] Where φιλονεικία and διαφωνία appear (but not φθόνος) their contraries are also attested: dispute and disagreement are opposed to harmony, communion, concord and concert, ἁρμονία, κοινωνία, ὁμόνοια and συμφωνία,[61] as is noted, for at least some of these terms, in the passage with which the letter sent to Alexander and Arius concludes (2.72.3):

> ἀνοίξατε δή μοι λοιπὸν ἐν τῇ καθ' ὑμᾶς ὁμονοίᾳ τῆς ἑῴας τὴν ὁδόν, ἣν ταῖς πρὸς ἀλλήλους φιλονεικίαις ἀπεκλείσατε, καὶ συγχωρήσατε θᾶττον ὑμᾶς τε ὁμοῦ καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ἅπαντας δήμους ἐπιδεῖν χαίροντα, καὶ τὴν ὑπὲρ τῆς κοινῆς ἁπάντων ὁμονοίας καὶ ἐλευθερίας ὀφειλομένην χάριν ἐπ' εὐφήμοις λόγων συνθήμασιν ὁμολογῆσαι τῷ κρείττονι.
>
> By the concord among you open to me now the road to the east, which you have shut by the controversies between you, and make it quickly possible for me to look with pleasure both on you and on all the other congregations, and in pleasing terms to express to the Supreme my debt of thanks for the general concord and liberation of all.

The contrary of this principle of disunion is not expressed just in these words (ἁρμονία, κοινωνία, ὁμολογία, ὁμόνοια). It is possible that Constantine's desire to attain agreement is seen above all in the almost visible verbal images (ἐναργεῖς) that Eusebius uses in key moments of his account of the Council (the opening ceremony, the warm reception given to the bishops). With their visual power, they aim to show the reader an ideal situation of agreement under the aegis of the Emperor, an image of earthly harmony that aspires to be an image of the Kingdom of God.[62] Perhaps Eusebius was referring in 3.3 to Constantine as the

60 See 2.71.2 (-έω), 2.71.6; 3.5.1, 3.18.5. Regarding the expression of agreement and disunity in Sozomen via forms derived from φωνή such as διαφων- and συμφων- or ὁμοφων- (this is documented only one time in *VC* 3.14), see Quiroga Puertas (2015: 113).

61 ἁρμονία: 2.69.1; 3.21.2. κοινωνία: 2.70, 2.71.5, 2.71.6; 3.18.4 (-έω), 3.19.1. ὁμόνοια: 2.72.3 (×2); 3.20.2. συμφωνία: 3.12.4, 3.17.2, 3.21 (-έω), 3.23. It is worth remembering that κοινωνία is also an important concept in the *New Testament*; although it does not appear in the *Gospels* nor in *Apoc.*, it does appear once in *Acts* (2,42) and eighteen times in the letters (*Rom.* 15,26; *1Cor.* 1,9, 10,16 (×2); *2Cor.* 6,14, 8,4, 9,13, 13,13; *Gal.* 2,9; *Phil.* 1,5, 2,1, 3,10; *Philem.* 6; *Hebr.* 13,16; *1John.* 1,3 (×2), 1,6, 1,7). Concerning the ideal and utopian value of κοινωνία, from Pythagoreanism to Christian monasticism, see Hernández de la Fuente (2014).

62 Recall what was said in section 2 and n. 10 about Constantine as an image of the monarchic power of God.

creator or inspirer of material images that revealed his identity as a Christian because he, the bishop of Caesarea, was conscious that as a literary author he himself was the creator of verbal icons. And these were able to play for their public not just an epideictic role but also a spiritual one: as the preface of the *VC* states (*VC* 1.10.2–3), ἡ τῶν καλῶν μίμησις πρὸς τὸν θεῖον ἔρωτα διεγείρει τὸν πόθον ("desire is stimulated to divine affection by the imitation of noble deeds").[63]

63 Eusebius's verbal icons fulfil an epideictic function, insofar as the *VC* is an example of this kind of oratory; regarding Eusebius and the epideictic genus (in the *VC* and other works), cf. Kennedy (1999^2: 161–163); Cameron and Hall (1999: 29–33). One must recognize, on the other hand, the care and accuracy with which the bishop of Caesarea composes this part of his narrative, qualities that do not mesh with the habitual adverse judgements about his qualities as a writer; cf. Cameron and Hall (1999: 27).

CHAPTER 5

In Heaven unlike on Earth. Rhetorical Strategies in Julian's *Caesars*[*]

Alberto J. Quiroga Puertas

The emperor Julian's *Caesars* is an extremely amusing dialogue whose richness, both in content and form, eludes its ascription to a single literary genre.[1] The dialogue begins with an intervention by Julian in which he addresses an interlocutor[2] to whom he will retell a myth that Hermes told him on how the gods celebrated the Saturnalia with a symposium to which Roman emperors (and similar powerful figures) were invited. The first lines of the dialogue explain why Julian felt compelled to write this work (306a–b):

> It is the season of the Kronia, during which the god allows us to make merry. But, my dear friend, as I have no talent for amusing or entertaining (γελοῖον δὲ οὐδὲν οὐδὲ τερπνὸν οἶδα ἐγώ) I must methinks take pains not to talk nonsense (…) For by nature I have no turn for raillery, or parody, or raising a laugh (Πέφυκε γὰρ οὐδαμῶς ἐπιτήδειος οὔτε σκώπτειν οὔτε παρῳδεῖν οὔτε γελοιάζειν). But since I must obey the ordinance of the god of the festival, should you like me to relate to you by way of entertainment a myth in which there is perhaps much that is worth hearing?[3]

These opening lines may well be considered authentically and truly autobiographical, reminding us of Julian's bitter and humorous *Misopogon*, a *rara avis*

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1 For the date and place of composition of this work, and its problematic transmission under different titles (*Kronia*, *Caesars*, *Symposium*), see Bowersock (1982: 160, n. 6); Gallardo (1972: 282–284); Pack (1946: 154, n. 9); Lacombrade (1964: 4–5); Relihan (1993: 119); Sardiello (2000: VII–XI, XXVII–XXXVI).

2 On the identity of the interlocutor, see Elm (2012: 285).

3 Translations of Julian's *Caesars* taken from Calver Wright (1913).

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that shares with *Caesars* his unmistakable blend of autobiography, self-parody and social chastisement. His acknowledgment of a lack of any talent for joking, entertaining or deriding fits well with the emperor's personality yet cannot conceal his rhetorical prowess and his taste for vitriol when it came to creating moral and philosophical invectives. Then Julian sets the scene by describing how the gods were accommodated in thrones and seats in the upper part of the sky, with emperors from Julius Caesar to Constantine and his sons walking onto the scene following a chronological order. The satyr Silenus, the most talkative character of the dialogue, takes the opportunity to make ironic puns about physical or moral aspects of the emperors. Not all of them are granted admission to the banquet: Nero, Caracalla, Helliogabalus or Carus are refused entry by Justice or Minos because of their misdeeds and atrocities. Once the emperors' parade is over, Hermes organizes a contest of speeches among a short-list of emperors (Alexander, who was a late guest invited by Heracles, Julius Caesar, Octavian, Trajan, Marcus Aurelius and Constantine). At the conclusion of the contest, each emperor answers a number of questions posed by Hermes. The gods pronounce Marcus Aurelius the winner of the competition, but this passes almost unnoticed when Zeus commands that each emperor should choose a protector. Alexander selects Heracles; Octavian opts for Apollo, while Marcus for Zeus and Cronos, Trajan for Alexander; Julius Caesar is called by Ares and Aphrodite, and Constantine goes into the arms of *Truphe* and *Asotia* (the personifications of "pleasure" and "incontinence") before meeting Jesus who is preaching the advantages of being baptised. Julian reserves the last lines of the dialogue for himself: Hermes announces to him that he has been put under the safe guidance of Mithras.[4]

From a literary viewpoint, the general framework of the dialogue is somewhat miscellaneous. Clearly modelled on Plato's *Symposium*,[5] Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*, Lucian's *The Parliament of the Gods*,[6] and Plutarch's *Lives*, *Caesars* is a highly rhetoricized dialogue in which elements of different literary forms converge. Weinbrot and Relihan, for instance, have analysed the elements that

4 For the relationship between Mithra's cult and the Saturnalia, see Beck (2000: 179–180). Pack (1946: 154) has highlighted the relationship between Julian's *Or*. 4.158b and *Caes*. 336c.

5 On the impact of this work on late antique dialogues, see Cameron (2014: 13, 40–43). For Julian borrowing elements from Plato's *Symposium* for this dialogue, see Gallardo (1972: 285, 295–296); König (2012: 198–199); Long (2006: 63); Relihan (1993: 125).

6 Although this is not the place to make this case, I think that the assumption of a strong literary dependence on Lucian's dialogue (see, for instance, Lacombrade 1964: 26–27; Relihan 1993: 122, 133) should be contested. The subtexts of Julian's work, the topics he deals with and the literary techniques he uses vary from those in Lucian's dialogue.

Julian borrowed from Menippean satire (such as the use of prose and verse, the incongruous setting of the work, the omnipresence of comic elements, and the peculiar use of poetic citations).[7] In the same vein, the carnivalesque sense that pervades Julian's piece betrays its kinship to the σπουδογέλοιον, a form that had been traditionally used in Classical Antiquity as a way to chastise, mock and criticize individuals and social habits.[8]

Although modern scholars such as Roger Pack seem unable to picture Julian as a writer with a parodic vein,[9] it seems that the mocking tone of *Caesars* was correctly perceived by his contemporaries. Julian himself tells us that his friend Sallustius had enjoyed the dialogue.[10] The sophist Libanius, according to Célérier,[11] gave a nod to the emperor's dialogue when he said that Julian was the author of conversational and bewitching works.[12] Needless to say, the reception of the work was less enthusiastic in Christian circles. Gregory of Nazianzus denounced the impious image of the concept of the divinity in the mocking scenes of the dialogue and reversed a number of arguments that the emperor had used in his work to chastise some imperial figures, in order to fuel his own invective against Julian.[13] Also the Church historian Socrates Scholasticus regarded *Caesars* as a display of κενοδοξία ("vanity, vainglory", a key concept in Socrates' agenda) and as a display of (*HE* III.1.177) τὸ … διασύρειν ἢ σκώπτειν (to ridicule, to mock), putting also a strong emphasis on the theatrical dimension of the dialogue.[14]

Fruitful as it may be to approach this work as an example of *Kreuzung der Gattungen*, my interest in Julian's *Caesars* lies elsewhere. In my opinion, this is a sophisticated and complex reformulation of several rhetorical forms that contains numerous subtexts that were used by the emperor to put forward important concepts of his religious and cultural program. By harmonizing

7 Relihan (1993: 119–134); Weinbrot (2005: 50–61).

8 See Giangrande (1972). For a thorough catalogue of the bibliography on the topic, see Fuentes González (1998: 77–78).

9 Pack (1946: 154). For a consideration of Julian and his works as products of a humorless man, see Bowersock (1982: 159–160); Marcone (2012: 246); Weinbrot (2005: 52). For a different consideration, see Drake (2012: 41); Relihan (1993: 121); Smith (1995: 14; 2012: 281–283).

10 *Or.* 4.157c.

11 Célérier (2013: 42–43).

12 Lib. *Or.* 12.92: διαλεκτικούς, κάλλος ἐπῶν· ὧν τοῖς μὲν ἐγκωμιάζεις, τοῖς δὲ πείθεις, τοῖς δὲ ἀναγκάζεις, τοῖς δὲ θέλγεις.

13 Célérier (2013: 248, 328).

14 Socr. *HE*. III.1.174: ἐκωμῴδησεν ἐν τῷ λόγῳ ὃν ἐπέγραψε Καίσαρας. See also Célérier (2013: 397, 399).

rhetorical forms that could unite criticism and witticism to his philosophical and political agenda, Julian was able to deal with a number of pressing themes at the same time. Likewise the peculiar atmosphere of the Saturnalia allowed Julian to promulgate and strengthen his religious, political and philosophical tenets by proposing new uses for well-established rhetorical tropes. Thus, in this work, I will focus my attention on two rhetorical forms that were used by Julian in accordance with his needs. First, I will attempt to analyse the role and the philosophical implications of the *ekphrastic* technique used at the beginning of the myth in order to set the scene. This ἔκφρασις, I will argue, was accommodated to Julian's Neoplatonic conception of the divine realm, and set the tone that would prevail over the rest of the dialogue. Second, I will contend that the portrayal of the emperors that paraded in the philosophical contest organized by the gods in the Saturnalia constitutes an adaptation of the precepts codified by Menander Rhetor, and that these were reused by Julian to combine his political judgement of previous emperors with humorous and intertextual remarks appropriate to what the Saturnalia represented.

1 Staging Theology

Julian begins to retell Hermes' myth by setting the scene with an ἔκφρασις.[15] We are told that Quirinus[16] invited the gods and the emperors to commemorate the Saturnalia. According to Julian's description, the seating arrangement of the gods had been made following Neoplatonic hierarchical principles.[17] While the emperors were located in the sublunar region, sustained by (307c) "the lightness of the bodies with which they had been invested, and also the revolution of the moon", priority seats were reserved for the gods "at the very apex of the sky" (307b: ἄνω κατ' αὐτό, φασίν, οὐρανοῦ τὸ μετέωρον), a reference that is embellished by a Homeric quote (*Od.* VI.42): "Olympus where they say is the seat of the gods, unshaken forever".[18] The distribution of the seats, arranged (308b) κατὰ πρεσβείαν following a circular arrangement (308c: κύκλῳ τῶν θεῶν καθη-

15 Among the plethora of recent bibliographical references, see especially D'Angelo (1998); Newby (2002); Webb (2009). Its rhetorical treatment can be found in Theon, *Prog.* 11.118 7–8; Hermog., *Prog.* 11.16.10.1; Apht., *Prog.* 10.36.22. On its consideration as a "genre" or as a "technique", see Webb (2009: 2–7).

16 On the use of Quirinus instead of Romulus, see Lacombrade (1964: 19–21).

17 Sardiello (2000: 91).

18 On the satiric use of verses in this work, see Relihan (1993: 127–131).

μένων), included an ἔκφρασις that described the thrones of Cronos, Zeus, Rhea and Hera, the four superior gods (308c: τοῖς μεγίστοις θεοῖς):[19]

> That of Cronos was made of gleaming ebony, which concealed in its blackness a lustre so intense and divine that no one could endure to gaze thereon. For in looking at that ebony, the eyes suffered as much, methinks, from its excess of radiance as from the sun when one gazes too intently at its disc. The couch of Zeus was more brilliant than silver, but paler than gold; whether however one ought to call this "electrum"[20] or to give it some other name, Hermes could not inform me precisely.

A programmatic structure oversees the different interpretative levels of this ἔκφρασις. On one level, the strong Neoplatonic symbolism of the passage is emphasized by the colours of the thrones. Although this is not the subject of this paper, I would like to point out that these colours were not randomly chosen. On the contrary, as Athanassiadi has proven, the blackness of Cronos' throne "symbolizes infinite time, a concept which Mithraists identified with the First Cause", and the reference to silver and gold in the description of Zeus' throne should be associated with Helios and Selene.[21] On a second level, the *ekphrastic* nature of this passage is evidenced by the use of words relating to the sight (ἀντιβλέπειν, τὰ ὄμματα, προσβλέπῃ) and, especially, those pertaining to the verb στίλβω (to glitter). The ebony of Cronos' throne is gleaming (στιλβούσης), and the couch of Zeus was more brilliant (στιλπνοτέρα) than silver. In addition to the evident visual dimension of these words, it should be added that the rest of the instances in which Julian used terms from the same stem (στίλβω) were present in *ekphrastic* or theological contexts. In his *Panegyric in honour of the emperor Constantius*, for example, Julian resorted two times to στίλβω in *ekphraseis* of the army and soldiers.[22] In a more philosophical tone

19 On the possible symbolism of Cronos in the Mithraic religion, see Lacombrade (1964: 22); Smith (1995: 125–138, esp. 126).

20 Lacombrade (1964: 23) wonders if the mention to electrum "symboliserait-il la hiérogamie féconde des deux divinités?" since gold was the "métal solaire—Zeus étant identifié au Soleil" and silver was the "métal lunaire—Hera étant assimilée à la Lune". See also Sardiello (2000: 93).

21 Athanassiadi (1981: 197). For the Mithraic content of Julian's political philosophy, see Alonso Núñez (1974); Hidalgo de la Vega (1990); Long (2006: 68–70). On the problem of representing God, see Maximus of Tyre, *Diss*. XI.2–5. It is interesting to note that Lucian, *On the Syrian Goddess* 34 says that the only representation of Helios and Selene in the temple of Atagartis in Hierapolis was a throne, since the form of these gods was known to all.

22 *Or*. 1.31b–c; 37d.

in his *Hymn to the King Helios*, he associates Aphrodite to Helios and described the rays she sends as "brighter than gold" (150b: χρυσίου στιλπνοτέρας). However, when it came to describing the beauty of the gods (308a: Τὸ δὲ τῶν θεῶν κάλλος),[23] Julian resorted to the Neoplatonic relationship between the concept of beauty and the light when he confessed that:

> not even Hermes tried to describe it in his tale; he said that it transcended description, and must be comprehended by the eye of the mind; for in words it was hard to portray and impossible to convey to mortal ears. Never indeed will there be or appear an orator so gifted that he could describe such surpassing beauty as shines forth on the countenances of the gods.

After a simpler description of Rhea's and Hera's thrones ("On either side of these sat on golden thrones the mother and daughter, Hera beside Zeus and Rhea beside Cronos"),[24] Julian relies on a well-known topic: the inability of human speech to comprehend and describe the sight of the divine, a topic with a very similar wording that we can find in other writings by Julian. Thus, the aforementioned *Hymn to the King Helios* begins with Julian's humble acknowledgement of his incapacity to evoke images of the divine that could be understood by human senses (*Or*. 4.131d–132a): "Now it is hard, as well I know, merely to comprehend how great is the Invisible, if one judge by his visible self, and to tell it is perhaps impossible (φράσαι δὲ ἴσως ἀδύνατον), even though one should consent to fall short of what is his due". Julian shared this concern with other imperial authors such as Lucian of Samosata and Eusebius of Caesarea, namely what the limits of ἔκφρασις were when describing the divine.[25]

What is of interest to this work is that Julian clearly instrumentalized this ἔκφρασις of the divine realm in order to accommodate it to his theological tenets. On the one hand, Julian denied the understanding of the divine by means of words after stating that human logos cannot aspire to uttering anything relating to the divine world (308a): "never indeed will there be or appear an orator so gifted that he could describe such surpassing beauty as shines forth

23 On the Neoplatonic implications of the concept of "beauty", see Edwards (2006: 56–57, 106–107). An attempt to express it can be found in Maximus of Tyre, *Diss*. XI.11. See Sardiello (2000: 93–94) on the use of the theme of the beauty of the gods in late antique productions.

24 Lucian's *On the Syrian Goddess* 32 also contains an ἔκφρασις of Hera's (and Zeus') golden throne. On the role of Rhea in Neoplatonism, see Lacombrade (1964: 22–23). See also Müller (1998: 180–181).

25 See Van Nuffelen (2013: 143–145).

on the countenances of the gods". On the other hand, the visual dimension of the ἔκφρασις is monopolized by the glittering brightness of the beauty of the gods that emanated from Cronos' and Zeus' thrones as well as from the golden thrones of Rhea and Hera. This could be explained by adopting Newby's analysis of the *ekphraseis* deployed by Lucian in his *On the Hall*. Newby considers that the lack of detail regarding the subject of some of the paintings of the hall described by Lucian implies that one of the speakers of the dialogue was more interested in emphasising the discourse of the paintings than underlining their visual impact.[26] Likewise, in Julian's ἔκφρασις, the audience is visually blinded by the overwhelming brightness of the thrones, thus imposing a theological and religious discourse that Hermes was verbally incapable of transmitting.

This was, in my opinion, purposely contrived by Julian and constitutes a perfect adaptation of a rhetorical form such as the ἔκφρασις to his philosophical programme. The complexity of the object of Julian's description (the gods themselves and their thrones) made him want to explore the limits of ἔκφρασις and the degree to which he could use this form for the *mise en scène* of the dialogue while also adding a strong Neoplatonic tone to it. In this sense, rather than abusing the *ekphrastic* technique by composing a verbose description of the divine realm, Julian resorted to bright images to convey the ineffability of the gods, and to stress that their beauty "must be comprehended by the eye of the mind (308a: νῷ θεατόν)" alone.[27] Therefore, the rhetorical tension at the core of the ἔκφρασις (the relationship between the visual and verbal dimension) is solved thanks to the implementation of a philosophical concept. Disguised under a rhetorical cloak imbued with philosophical content, this ἔκφρασις betrays a pedagogical and propedeutic intention in the service of Julian's belief: the gap between gods and humans can only be bridged in a Neoplatonic way as the direct gaze of the deities is denied in this description.[28] If we understand ἔκφρασις, as Elsner does, to be composed of an enabling element that helps the viewer to see an occluding component, in Julian's ἔκφρασις of the divine realm it is brightness that helps and impedes the gaze at the same time.[29]

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26 Newby (2002).

27 On the Neoplatonic conception of the *nous*, see Smith (1974: 40–55).

28 In similar terms, see Iamblichus' recommendations on how to understand the divine philosophy of Pythagoras (*VP* 1): "Moreover, its beauty and grandeur surpass the human capacity to grasp it all at once: only by approaching quietly, little by little, under the guidance of a benevolent god, can one appropriate a little" (translation taken from Clark 1989).

29 Elsner (2007: 22–26, 68). For a study on the use of statues as symbolic representations of the divine that helped understand the intelligible essence of the divine realm in Late Antiquity, see Deligiannakis (2015).

Finally, on a third level, this ἔκφρασις of the divine world serves as a sharp contrast to the sections of the dialogue that follow. After demonstrating that sensible apprehension of the gods is impossible, the emperors' pageant is characterized precisely by a rhetoricized catalogue of their physical and moral features that contributes to Julian's narrative project in two ways: first, the description of the emperors is encapsulated by the ironic remarks of Silenus, a strategy that helped Julian in the creation of the literary characterization of each emperor both as a character of his dialogue and as the embodiment of a set of flaws and vices that were integrated into *Caesars* with an exemplary purpose. Second, these recognizable (and sometimes stereotyped) portraits of the emperors broke intentionally with what Van Nuffelen has called "cascades of images",[30] that is, Julian interrupted the link that in political philosophy related the emperors to God(s) by means of a cascade of images whose original model would be God. In the case of *Caesars'* ἔκφρασις, it is apparent that the bright light that emanates from the thrones of the four main gods together with the unspeakable beauty of the gods clearly differentiates them from the debauchery and mundane features of the emperors described by Julian. As Relihan has demonstrated, this type of narrative is a *catoscopia*, a common feature in the Menippean satire in which looking down emphasizes the sense of observing the folly that in Julian's *Caesars* the emperor's parade constitutes.[31] Simultaneously, this ἔκφρασις maintains a discourse coherent with the philosophical exegesis practiced by Neoplatonists when dealing with ontological hierarchies[32]—in this particular case, embedded in a myth, a form that Julian used for philosophical and religious purposes.[33] Consequently, unlike the multisensorial *ekphraseis* so prevalent in his times,[34] Julian took recourse to this rhetorical form to impose a narrative full of Neoplatonic overtones that, at the same time, set the tone for the most derisive part of the dialogue.

30 Van Nuffelen (2013: 137–139).

31 Relihan (1993: 131).

32 See Long (2012: 331); Pack (1946: 155–157). See especially Weinbrot (2005: 54): "We have, then, an orderly hierarchic sequence: a tale about the father of the god's festival is told by Mercury the messenger of the gods, to the Emperor of Rome, who tells it to an important friend, who becomes a judge, and who is our surrogate".

33 Sardiello (2000: 87): "il desiderio giulianeo di riabilitare il mito nasce dal suo ruolo di restauratore del paganesimo e dalla sua concezione della filosofia come teologia". For Julian's classification of myths, see *Or.* 7.216b–218a. See especially *Or.* 7.227b, where Julian portraits himself as a "myth-maker". In his *On the Gods and the World* III–IV the Neoplatonic philosopher Sallustius instructs on the appropriate use of the philosophical myth.

34 See, for instance, Ammianus Marcellinus 16.10.6–8.

2 The Emperors' Parade

The performative dimension of the dialogue takes center stage with the emperors' parade. Casting previous emperors under the sharp light of invective allowed Julian to defend his estimation of the nature and role of the emperor in the fourth century AD. In doing so, he did not mind taking some liberties with historical fact for the sake of dramatic exigencies.[35] In this passage, which occupies the central part of the dialogue (308b–316a), he mocked the stock imagery of late antique βασιλικὸς λόγος, an enduring rhetorical form whose use was prevalent in Imperial times for obvious reasons.[36] Unlike the ἔκφρασις of the supralunar realm, Julian's reformulation and reutilization of the materials compiled by Menander Rhetor sought to sketch out his own portrait of his predecessors by stretching the boundaries of the βασιλικὸς λόγος in order to articulate a distorted *speculum principum* of previous imperial figures (including Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great).

The brief presentation of each emperor often follows a similar pattern: a brush-stroke of his physical appearance and behaviour and an ironic intervention by the gods—most of the time by Silenus. Take, for instance, the case of Tiberius (309c–d). First, he is described as a man "with countenance solemn and grim, and an expression at once sober and martial. But as he turned to sit down his back was seen to be covered with countless scars, burns, and sores, painful welts and bruises, while ulcers and abscesses were as though branded thereon, the result of his self-indulgent and cruel life". Then, Dionysus and Silenus comment on biographical anecdotes that contribute to the characterization of Tiberius as an angry and cruel emperor.[37] Similar in form yet different in content is the treatment of the figure of Marcus Aurelius: this most-revered emperor deserved Silenus' utmost respect for his "exalted virtue" (312b: τὸ μέγεθος αὐτοῦ τῆς ἀρετῆς), but Silenus, wildly outspoken as he was, could not refrain from reproaching Marcus for his erratic decisions regarding his wife Faustina and his son Commodus.

35 Pack (1946: 157).

36 In relating a highly biased history of Roman emperors through a rhetorical lens, Julian presents us with a catalogue in which one of the basic tenets of Menander is subverted (368.17–21): "the two greatest things in human life are piety towards the divine and honour to emperors; these, therefore, we should honour and hymn to the best of our ability". Translation taken from Russell and Wilson (1981). On the rhetorical strategies in the creation of negative portrayals of emperors, see Flower (2013: 97–106).

37 These anecdotes (about the grammarian Seleucus and a fisherman from Capri) can be found in Suet., *Tib.* 56, 60.

Within this narrative pattern, Julian subverted Menander's precepts for praising an emperor. In the internal thematic division of the rhetorical treatise there is ample room for eulogising the emperors' accomplishments (ἐπιτηδεύματα, 372.2–5): "qualities of character not involved with real competitive actions because they display character". Instead, caricaturing snapshots come to the fore in Julian's *Caesars*. The first figure to appear in the pageant is that of Julius Caesar.[38] Apart from characterizing him as tall, handsome and bald, all that is remarked about him is his excessive φιλοτιμία and φιλαρχία (308b), such that made Silenus warn Zeus to heed his power lest he risk losing it on Julius' behalf. The first emperor of the Roman Empire, Octavian, features as fickle in character like a chameleon, changing from a gloomy figure to a walking display of (309b) "all the charms of Aphrodite and the Graces". In his presence Silenus grew so unnerved that Apollo intervened by asking the Stoic Zeno to recite some of his doctrines. Finally when it came to showing the character of Caligula, Julian went as far as to dehumanize him by calling him a "fierce beast" (310a: θηρίον πονηρόν), and having him sent to Tartarus. Therefore, contrary to Menander's dicta, exemplary character and inspiring behavior was rarely referred to in Julian's description of most of the emperors.

Julian's rhetorical dexterity is again shown by the different means he made use of to adapt praiseworthy actions of war, an important topic in Menander's work, to the intention of his dialogue. The turmoil of the year 69 A.D., when the Empire was ruled by four different emperors,[39] is sarcastically referred to by Silenus thus (310d): "Where, ye gods, have ye found such assembly[40] of monarchs? We are being suffocated with their smoke; for brutes of this sort spare not even the temple of the gods". In the same vein, Trajan is shown entering with the trophies of his wars against the Getae and the Parthians, thus following Menander's recommendation when praising war actions (374.20–21: τρόπαια τροπαίοις συνάψεις, καὶ νίκας νίκαις). The epic of the scene, however, is again interrupted by Silenus' sexual innuendo: "Now is the time for Zeus our master to look out, if he wants to keep Ganymedes for himself". Similarly, Valerian and Vespasian are not permitted to enter with the rest of the emperors. The former appears in chains symbolizing his poor record in military matters after his unsuccessful campaign against the Persians, and the latter represents the reversal of manliness since he shows up "with the dress and languishing gait of a woman" (313b–c: ὁ δὲ στολῇ τε καὶ κινήσει χρώμενος μαλακωτέρᾳ ὥσπερ

38 On the role of Julius Caesar in this work, see Long's complete study (2006).

39 On the apparition of Vindex as an emperor in this context, see Bowersock (1982: 164).

40 Here I depart from Cave Wright (1913), who reads σμῆνος, and adopt the reading δῆμος from Lacombrade's edition (1964).

αἱ γυναῖκες). Although with much less frequency, Julian adapts the imperial virtue of wisdom (Men. Rh. 376.13–23) to the portrayal of some of his emperors, albeit culminating with Silenus' frivolous remarks. Hadrian, for instance, is described as being just short of a polymath for his knowledge of arts, music and astrology (311d). Despite this flattering portrait, he could not escape Silenus' sting: "What think ye of this sophist? Can he be looking here for Antinous? One of you should tell him that the youth is not here, and make him cease from his madness and folly".

The reformulation of these rhetorical topics to fit Julian's aims cannot be fully explained without underlining his prowess in implementing his own literary knowledge by quoting texts that help him make his point—a new twist on Menander's treatise, in which quotations from Homer, Plato, Xenophon or Isocrates used to support his advice can be found. For example, the emperor Claudius' lust for praise and ostentation of power is compared to Demos' taste for flattery in Aristophanes' *Knights* (vv. 1112–1120).[41] In the case of the example of Gallienus and Valerian, Silenus quotes Euripides' *Phoenician Women* (120: "Who is this with the white plume that leads the army's van?") to identify Valerian with Hippomedon (one of Eteocles' supporters that died in their attack on Thebes) in order to underpin the emperor's failed campaign against the Persians. In Gallienus' case, Silenus alters a verse from the *Iliad* (11.872) to show Gallienus' effeminacy: "(Amphimachus) came to the war all decked with gold, like a girl, fool that he was".[42] These passages show us Julian's historical and literary universe as a reservoir of rhetorical exempla deployed to aid in the moral characterization of the emperors that appear in his *Caesars*. In this sense, Julian imposed his own religious and political program onto historical facts.[43] Aware as he was of the benefits derived from critical historical judgment, it was far from his intention to develop a historiographical methodology.[44] Simply put, this dialogue was a divertissement in which Julian gave himself free rein to

41 Ar. *Eq.* 1112–1120 (translation from Sommerstein 1981): "Demos, your rule is glorious indeed, seeing that all men fear you like a man of autocratic power. But you are easily led astray, you enjoy being flattered and deceived, and every orator holds you agape, with your mind present and yet absent!" Vid. also Sen., *Apocol.* 13.1; Suet., *Cl.* 29; Tac., *Ann.* 12.41.

42 Eur. *Phoen.*872: ὃς καὶ χρυσὸν ἔχων πόλεμον δ' ἴεν ἠΰτε κούρη, reformulated in Julian as Ὃς καὶ χρυσὸν ἔχων πάντη τρυφᾷ ἠΰτε κούρη. On the problematic identification of ὅς, see Kirk (1985: 261). See also Sardiello (2000: 118–119).

43 On the historical sources and inaccuracies of the work, see Bowersock (1982: 164–166); Gallardo (1972: 287–290).

44 See his *Or.* 3.124b–c for the pedagogical value he attributed to history. See also Kaegi (1964: 33–37); Relihan (1993: 120); Smith (1995: 12–14). Célérier (2013: 117, 245–246) suggests *Caesar's* influence as a source of Ammianus' and Zosimus' works. The influence of Aurelius

express his sympathies (note the empathetic and almost autobiographical section devoted to the emperor Probus, 314a–d) and aversions (see, for instance, Constantine's humiliation in 329 c–d).[45]

Leaving aside the ironical colour of the work, the composition of this dialogue did not respond to the need to historically assess the merits of his predecessors but to support two important aspects of his program. First, Julian saw himself as a new Hercules-Alexander, a new Trajan, and a new Marcus Aurelius. Since *Caesars* was written while Julian was planning the Persian campaign, it is no wonder that Alexander, Trajan and Marcus Aurelius have a preeminent role in the dialogue and make it to the final round of this imperial contest. As S. Elm has pointed out, "Julian's models were those Roman emperors (Alexander *honoris causa*) who, as true philosopher-kings, had been successful against Persia".[46] Second, an important underlying subtext throughout the dialogue is Julian's attempt to strengthen the link between the imperial power and the cult of Helios. The positive appraisal of Claudius Gothicus (see, especially, Julian's praise of Claudius' μεγαλοψυχία, 313d) and of Aurelian in *Caesars* is explained by their support in promoting the cult of Sol Invictus. The case of Aurelian is especially striking as he was defended by Helios himself against the many charges of murders against him (313d–314a).[47]

If the time-honoured tradition of the βασιλικὸς λόγος provided Julian with the literary technology against which to contextualize his satirical *jeu d'esprit* and to compose a distorted *speculum principum*, the content of the dialogue displays the emperor's taste for ψόγος. Julian knew how to make the most of the theoretical vagueness of the concept of ψόγος in rhetorical treatises. From Aristotle's oversimplification of the elements involved in the ψόγος (basically, the opposite of praise, *Rhet.* 1368a38: ὁ γὰρ ψόγος ἐκ τῶν ἐναντίων ἐστίν), to its similar consideration in Menander the Rhetor (331.18), the boundaries of ψόγος were as blurry as they were limitless. As Henriette van der Blom has pointed out in reference to the tradition of ψόγος, "the lack of a written constitution meant that individual laws and decrees, legal precedents, and tradition (*mos*)

Victor *De Caesaribus*, composed a few years before, has been discussed by Bowersock (1982: 160, 170); see also Varner (2012: 186).

45 On the significance of Probus' appearance in the dialogue, see Bowersock (1982: 161–162). Gregory of Nazianzus reacted against some of Julian's appraisals, Kaegi (1968: 37–38).

46 Athanassiadi (1981: 199–200); Elm (2012: 285); Sardiello (2000: XXIII–XXV). See also Julian's *ad. Them.* 253a–c. On the figure of Alexander in Julian's ideology, see Smith (2011: 45–46, 64–66, 96–97), whose opinion contradicts Elm's.

47 Varner (2012: 186). On the relationship between Helios and the Flavian dynasty, see Athanassiadi (1981: 179).

provided sources for proper legitimate practices. Many rules of the political and legal systems derived from tradition rather than laws and statutes, and *mos* also guided social norms".[48] This was a feature that enabled Julian to create a referential backdrop against which to select the actions of previous emperors in accordance with his moralizing purpose, a task that ideologically supplemented the legal measures of his program.

The exploitation of this strategy based on the use of ψόγος was furthered by the use of elements from the σπουδογέλοιον, a common element in satires such as *Caesars*. The hybrid nature of the σπουδογέλοιον, hinted at in the beginning of the work (307a: μίξις τίς ἐστιν ἀμφοῖν, ἀληθοῦς καὶ ψεύδους), inspires the ethos of this dialogue.[49] The deployment of several strategies and techniques signals Julian's debt to the σπουδογέλοιον: the use of the trope *mise en abyme* to retell Hermes' account,[50] the search for marked contrasts (e.g., the serious implications of Silenus' jokes and his extreme use of *parrhesia*), and the *ethica interpretatio* of the emperors.[51] The presence of σπουδογέλοιον is even more explicit in Silenus' reply to Dionysus' comment about his serious considerations of the emperor Probus (314d): "Do you not know that Socrates also, who was so like me, carried off the prize for philosophy from his contemporaries, at least if you believe that your brother tells the truth? You must allow me to be serious (σπουδαῖα) on occasion and not always jocose (γελοῖα)".[52] The σπουδογέλοιον nature of *Caesars* is also demonstrated in a sort of a metaliterary twist, since Julian's "comic contest for deification" bore important religious implications (namely, the Mithraic legitimation of the imperial power)[53] that were dealt with in this satire. In a new effort to distance himself from his predecessors, these last lines in which Julian was put under Mithras' protection reveal that he thought that he would achieve the divine condition without undertaking the process of apotheosis he mocked throughout this dialogue.[54]

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48 Van der Blom (2011: 49).

49 I am following here Camerotto's understanding of σπουδογέλοιον as (1998: 125) "non è semplicemente la compresenza in un unico testo di elementi comici e di elementi seri, ma rappresenta piuttosto l'ethos specifico di opere".

50 On the pertinence of choosing Hermes as the emissary in a σπουδογέλοιον context, see Sardiello (2000: 108). On the evolution of the concept, see Campos Daroca and López Cruces (1992).

51 On this topic, see Fuentes González (1992; 2015: 166–173).

52 On the implications of the assimilation between Silenus and Socrates, see Weinbrot (2005: 59). See Plat. *Symp.*, 215a; x. *Symp.* 5.7.

53 Célérier (2013: 156–157).

54 König (2012: 199–200); Relihan (1993: 120, 126).

3 Conclusion

By resorting to these countercultural tropes (ψόγος and σπουδογέλοιον), Julian empowered the critical and pedagogical dimension of his satire as he was aware that his Neoplatonic stance and concept of paganism demanded aggressive strategies if these were to be implemented in the spheres of power.[55] His proficient ability as a writer is attested to not only by this polysemic parade but also by the innuendos implicitly incorporated into his narrative. Relihan's acute analysis of *Caesars* shows that Julian's criticism and jokes were intended to distance himself from the emperors he mentioned in his catalogue.[56] It is, as Bowersock put it, a work of "self-revelation" and "self-justification".[57]

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55 Miralles (1970).

56 Relihan (1993: 126): "He has written of the other emperors not to show how he embodies their superior traits but to emphasize his utter difference from them in religious faith and moral consistency".

57 Bowersock (1982: 172).

CHAPTER 6

Asianism, Arianism, and the *Encomium of Athanasius* by Gregory of Nazianzus

Byron MacDougall

Heresiology did not spring fully-armed from the mind of any particular theologian. The discourse of theological heterodoxy was formed by drawing on existing discourses of other heterodoxies.[1] In this paper I offer a case study of one particularly fruitful grafting of a language of cultural heterodoxy from one rhetorical tradition onto another. The object of our inquiry is the oration on Athanasius of Alexandria by Gregory of Nazianzus, the Athenian-trained rhetor and erstwhile Bishop of Constantinople.[2] The heterodoxy in question is Arianism, both that of Athanasius' ecclesiastical opponents as well as that of the Neo-Arians of Gregory's own day, such as Aetius and Eunomius. As is so often the case, Gregory serves as the conduit whereby a particular ideological framework from Classical literature is transformed and then transmitted into the Christian tradition.

Gregory is ever contending against Eunomius, Aetius, and their so-called "Neo-Arian" allies—especially so for example in orations like 27 (*Against the Eunomians*) and 33 (*Against the Arians*). Occasionally he has the opportunity to engage ostensibly in polemic against the previous generation of Arian "heretics", a polemic which is to be understood as implicitly directed against their successors, Gregory's contemporaries. In his encomium of Athanasius of Alexandria he discusses the spread of Arianism throughout the eastern Mediterranean, and offers a lurid digression on the questionable background and education of one of his fellow countrymen, the Arian George of Cappadocia (*Or.* 21.16):

> Τέρας τι Καππαδόκιον, ἐκ τῶν ἐσχατιῶν τῶν ἡμετέρων ὁρμώμενον, πονηρὸν τὸ γένος, πονηρότερον τὴν διάνοιαν, οὐδὲ παντελῶς ἐλεύθερον ἀλλ' ἐπίμικτον, οἷον τὸ τῶν ἡμιόνων γινώσκομεν …

1 For an overview of critical approaches to Late Antique and Byzantine heresiology, see especially Cameron (2003).

2 For edition and French translation of *Oration* 21, see Mossay (1980: 110–193).

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> There was a monster from Cappadocia, born on our farthest confines, of low birth, and lower mind, who was not completely free-born but rather a mongrel, as we know the case of mules to be ...[3]

Gregory goes on to characterize this George, who was installed by Constantius II in Athanasius' episcopal seat in 356, as a low-born philistine lacking in paideia, literally as one who has "no share in the culture that befits a free man" (*Or.* 21.16: οὐ λόγων ἐλευθερίων μετεσχηκώς). He does not deign "to clothe himself even in the pretense or empty artifice of piety" (*Or.* 21.16: οὐκ εὐλαβείας σχῆμα γοῦν τι καὶ πλάσμα κενὸν περικείμενος). Like an exile, the Arian George "exchanged one country for another, going from city to city, finally descending, like some Egyptian plague, upon the city of the Alexandrians, to the misfortune of the Church community" (*Or.* 21.16: ἄλλην ἐξ ἄλλης ἀμεῖβον χώραν καὶ πόλιν, οἷα τὰ τῶν φυγάδων, τέλος ἐπὶ κακῷ τοῦ κοινοῦ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, οἷόν τις Αἰγυπτιακὴ πληγή, τὴν Ἀλεξανδρέων καταλαμβάνει).

An insidious pest, sprung from the barbarian hinterlands of Asia, that spreads from city to city corrupting their native values—Gregory is drawing on the "orientalizing" rhetoric of the Atticist movement in Greek literary history in order to tar the Arian George with the charge of Asianism, and in doing so to suggest a connection between the allegedly effeminate rhetorical style of the Asianists and the theology, language, and mores of the Arian heretics. It does not seem to have been previously noticed that Gregory is following very closely a text of formative importance for the development of Asianism as a rhetorical category: Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *Introduction* to his survey of the ancient Attic orators.[4] Like George of Cappadocia, Dionysius' Asianist disease hails from some Asian backwater (*Orat. Vett.* 1.1.7), "arriving only yesterday from some pits of Asia, a Mysian or a Phrygian, or some sort of Carian evil" (ἡ δὲ ἔκ τινων βαράθρων τῆς Ἀσίας ἐχθὲς καὶ πρῴην ἀφικομένη, Μυσὴ ἢ Φρυγία τις ἢ Καρικόν τι κακόν). For Gregory's description of George as "some Cappadocian monstrosity" (Τέρας τι Καππαδόκιον), we have Dionysius' description of Asianism as "some Carian evil" (Καρικόν τι κακόν); Asianism "arrived from some pits of Asia" (ἔκ τινων βαράθρων τῆς Ἀσίας ... ἀφικομένη) while George "came from the farthest confines of our land" (ἐκ τῶν ἐσχατιῶν τῶν ἡμετέρων ὁρμώμενον). Here we

3 Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

4 Henceforth *Intro* (= *Orat. Vett.* 1 in citations). For the text I cite the page and line numbers, as well as chapter and section numbers in brackets, from the edition of Aujac (1978: 70–74). For Asianism and Atticism, see Kennedy (1994: 95–96). For Dionysius' *Intro* as well as the rest of his study of the Attic orators within the context of the Asianism-Atticism debate, see especially Gabba (1982: 43–65).

should note how Gregory's participle and prepositional phrase closely follow those of Dionysius, and can compare Gregory's ὁρμώμενον with Dionysius' ἀφικομένη, and Gregory's ἐκ τῶν ἐσχατιῶν with ἔκ τινων βαράθρων. Further, Asianism (*Orat. Vett.* 1.1.3) "has no share in philosophy or education or anything worthy of a free-born man" (οὔτε φιλοσοφίας οὔτε ἄλλου παιδεύματος οὐδενὸς μετειληφυῖα ἐλευθερίου) as George has no part in *logoi* "worthy of a free-born man" (λόγων ἐλευθερίων μετεσχηκὼς)—we should note here how Gregory deploys a perfect participle formed from μετέχω just as Dionysius had used a perfect participle of μεταλαμβάνω. Finally, Asianism (*Orat. Vett.* 1.1.7) "decided to settle in Greek cities, where it expelled the other rhetorical tradition [i.e., the native Atticism] from her share in the affairs of the community" (Ἑλληνίδας ἠξίου διοικεῖν πόλεις ἀπελάσασα τῶν κοινῶν τὴν ἑτέραν), just as George went from city to city (ἄλλην ἐξ ἄλλης ἀμεῖβον χώραν καὶ πόλιν) before expelling Athanasius from his rightful episcopal seat. As Atticist rhetoric was expelled from her share in the "community" (τῶν κοινῶν), so George settled in Alexandria and expelled Athanasius to the misfortune of the "Church community" (τοῦ κοινοῦ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας). Thus Gregory constructs the story of George the Arian so as to follow, in both lexical and structural detail, the example set by Dionysius' account of the rise of Asianist rhetoric: both George and Asianism hail from the hinterlands of Asia Minor, both are bereft of true culture and education, and both settle in cities where they expel the rightful occupants, whose positions they, the uncultured newcomers, then usurp.

That Gregory should have chosen Dionysius as a model here in the first place is understandable. For Gregory's knowledge of Dionysius, we have the attestation of one of his letters, in which he explicitly refers to the latter's essay on the rhetorical style of Lysias,[5] who is the first Attic rhetor Dionysius discusses following his *Intro*. Moreover, Stratis Papaioannou has called attention to Gregory's debts to the writings of Dionysius on rhetorical theory and style.[6] As an Athenian-trained rhetor, it is clear that Gregory knew his Dionysius well.

Why however is Gregory renewing the old conflict between Atticism and Asianism? Why does he hint (not so subtly) at an equation between Asianism and Arianism? To begin with, Gregory is not alone in drawing upon old Atticist depictions of Asianist rhetoric in order to caricature Arians: R.P. Vaggione has shown how other participants in the rich tradition of anti-Arian invective revive some of the more colorful accusations leveled by the Atticists against Asianist rhetoric, noting for example how Gregory of Nyssa channels Philo-

5 *Ep.* 180 to Eudoxius (ed. Gallay).

6 Papaioannou (2006: 68–70).

stratus in likening Eunomius' oratory to a dancer's castanets. Vaggione further demonstrates how Dio Chrysostom's depiction of a Alexandrian courtroom echoing with the over-wrought strains of Asian cadences is transformed by several Nicene writers in their condemnation of the Arian penchant for adapting their creeds into easily learned street ditties to be sung by the masses.[7] Atticist lampoons of the loose speech and looser morals of Asianist rhetoricians are easily redeployed by Nicene theologians against Arians.

It seems moreover that the appeal for Gregory of Nazianzus of an Arian-Asianist equation runs deeper, and that it has to do with what he considers the false theory of language espoused by the Arians. For Gregory, the most demagogic and superficial feature of Arian theology, and thus the feature that lends itself most readily to comparison with the crowd-pleasing excesses of Asianist rhetoric, is the simplistic theory of language employed by the Arians, according to which names denote essence. This belief was of critical importance for parsing the meaning of the term ἀγέννητος when applied in a Trinitarian context to God the Father. Susanna Elm has discussed how the idea that names denote essence, famously described in Plato's *Cratylus* and argued over in the debate between Anomalists and Analogists, again becomes the fault line of a divide, this time between Nicenes and Eunomius' Neo-Arians.[8] Gregory's identification of Arians with Asianist rhetoric represents part of his strategy to discredit Arian ideas about language and proper theological discourse.

Throughout their respective works, Gregory of Nazianzus and his fellow Cappadocians respond to Neo-Arians such as Aetius and Eunomius who made absolute and totalizing statements regarding the nature of the divine, and who drew on classical theories of language in their claim that names, particularly the term ἀγέννητος ("unbegotten"), denote essence, and thus that they themselves wielded a theology capable of positively defining the nature of God.[9] For the Nicene Cappadocians, a name such as ἀγέννητος cannot denote the essence of God the Father, as it would then follow that He is of a different essence than His only-begotten Son. Thus the Cappadocians represent Neo-Arian the-

7 Vaggione (1993: 187). For the rhetorical construction of heresy see especially Le Boulluec (1985).

8 Elm (2012: 245–258).

9 For the language theory of Aetius and Eunomius as well as the ancient idea, notably represented by Plato's *Cratylus*, that names denote essence, see Elm (2012: 245–258) as well as Wickham (1968: 559–560) and Douglass (2005: 94–106). My warm thanks go to Noel Lenski for bringing the latter study to my attention.

ology as simplistic and popularizing,[10] and they characterize Eunomius' claim to speak about the divine using words that exactly delineate essence as "commit[ting] an act of analytical discursive violence by intruding with words where only silence is appropriate".[11]

It thus becomes clear why Dionysius' representation of Asianist rhetoric serves as a useful model for Gregory: Neo-Arian discourse, like Asianist rhetoric, is crowd-pleasing and superficially attractive, especially in its claim to be able to use names to define essences. Ultimately, however, Neo-Arian discourse has no legitimate claim to perform theology, just as Asianist rhetoric had no legitimate claim to usurp the place of Atticism, the φιλοσοφοῦα ῥητορική,[12] as the proper mode for Dionysius' ideal πολιτικὸς λόγος, or "civil eloquence".[13]

If Gregory casts George of Cappadocia in the role of Asianist rhetoric, then it follows that the restoration of Athanasius to his see in Alexandria is to be associated with the return of Atticism, the legitimate rhetorical style, to its rightful place. This association is already implicit in the way Gregory has constructed the episode: Athanasius is the rightful occupant of his episcopal throne and palace who is expelled by the upstart George, just as Atticism is depicted as the lawful mistress of the Greek *polis* who is displaced by the harlot of Asianism.[14] Again, this parallel is latent throughout Gregory's narrative of Athanasius' exile and restoration. There may be a point however when this parallel becomes more explicit, and in the interest of performing due investigative diligence I would adduce the following: after Athanasius' restoration, Gregory describes how he (*Or.* 21.31) "again makes laws for the *oikoumene*, and directs the attention of all to himself, writing to some, summoning others" (νομοθετεῖ δὲ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ πάλιν· ἐπιστρέφει δὲ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν πᾶσαν διάνοιαν, τοῖς μὲν ἐπιστέλλων, τοὺς δὲ καλῶν). Here we might compare Dionysius' explanation for the restoration of Atticism, which he attributes to the rise of Rome and its governance of the whole world (*Orat. Vett.* 1.3.1): αἰτία δ' οἶμαι καὶ ἀρχὴ τῆς τοσαύτης μεταβολῆς

10 For what the Cappadocians represent as the popularizing and vulgar aspects of Neo-Arian discourse, see Vaggione (1993: 184–186) and Douglass (2005: 20–23, especially 21): "The logical accessibility of a subordinationist understanding found great currency among the general public. Aetius, taking advantage of this, published a handbook for Neo-Arian 'street apologists'".

11 Douglass (2005: 84).

12 See Dion. Hal., *Orat. Vett.* 1.1.2.

13 For Dionysius' conception of πολιτικὸς λόγος and its traditional three-fold division into forensic, deliberative, and epideictic rhetoric, see Gabba (1982: 44).

14 See Dion. Hal., *Orat. Vett.* 1.1.5: ἡ μὲν ἐλευθέρα καὶ σώφρων γαμετὴ κάθηται μηδενὸς οὖσα τῶν αὑτῆς κυρία, ἑταίρα δέ τις ἄφρων ἐπ᾽ὀλέθρῳ τοῦ βίου παροῦσα πάσης ἀξιοῖ τῆς οὐσίας ἄρχειν.

ἐγένετο ἡ πάντων κρατοῦσα Ῥώμη πρὸς ἑαυτὴν ἀναγκάζουσα τὰς ὅλας πόλεις ἀποβλέπειν … ("I think the cause and beginning of such a change was Rome, which rules over everyone and compels all cities to look to herself …").

As Athanasius serves as a universal law-giver (νομοθετεῖ) for the *oikoumene* or inhabited world, so Rome, as the implicit universal law-giver, "rules over everyone" (ἡ πάντων κρατοῦσα). Rome can restore Atticism, as Athanasius can restore Orthodoxy, by directing the attention of everyone else to their own example, with Athanasius directing "every mind" to "himself", and Rome compelling "all the cities" to look to "herself": compare Gregory's πρὸς ἑαυτὸν πᾶσαν διάνοιαν with Dionysius' πρὸς ἑαυτὴν … τὰς ὅλας πόλεις. As Rome was the cure for the Asianist disease that had infected legitimate Atticist rhetoric, so Athanasius was the cure for the Arian heresy that had infected the Church.

Important to bring into conversation with Gregory's "Asianization" of the Arian George of Cappadocia is also his description of the origins of the heresy of Arianism itself. Though in what follows Gregory takes as his model not Dionysius of Halicarnassus but a different "orientalizing" passage, we will still see the same compositional principle at work: Gregory's transmutation of a discourse of cultural heterodoxy and decadence into one of religious heterodoxy.

A few paragraphs before bringing George of Cappadocia onto the scene, Gregory recounts the origins of Arianism itself (*Or.* 21.12–13):

> Ἦν ὅτε ἤκμαζε τὰ ἡμέτερα, καὶ καλῶς εἶχεν, ἡνίκα τὸ μὲν περιττὸν τοῦτο, καὶ κατεγλωττισμένον τῆς θεολογίας καὶ ἔντεχνον οὐδὲ πάροδον εἶχεν εἰς τὰς θείας αὐλάς, ἀλλὰ ταὐτὸν ἦν ψήφοις τε παίζειν, τὴν ὄψιν κλεπτούσαις τῷ τάχει τῆς μεταθέσεως, ἢ κατορχεῖσθαι τῶν θεατῶν παντοίοις καὶ ἀνδρογύνοις λυγίσμασι, καὶ περὶ Θεοῦ λέγειν τι καὶ ἀκούειν καινότερον καὶ περίεργον· τὸ δὲ ἁπλοῦν τε καὶ εὐγενὲς τοῦ λόγου, εὐσέβεια ἐνομίζετο. Ἀφ' οὗ δὲ Σέξτοι, καὶ Πύρρωνες, καὶ ἡ ἀντίθετος γλῶσσα, ὥσπερ τι νόσημα δεινὸν καὶ κακόηθες, ταῖς Ἐκκλησίαις ἡμῶν εἰσεφθάρη· καὶ ἡ φλυαρία παίδευσις ἔδοξε, καί, ὅ φησι περὶ Ἀθηναίων ἡ βίβλος τῶν Πράξεων, εἰς οὐδὲν ἄλλο εὐκαιροῦμεν, ἢ λέγειν τι καὶ ἀκούειν καινότερον … Ταύτης τῆς λύσσης ἤρξατο μὲν Ἄρειος, ὁ τῆς μανίας ἐπώνυμος …
>
> There was a time when our affairs flourished and were doing well, when this vain, affected and artificial form of theology had not yet gained entry to the divine courts, and when it was still considered equally vain to play with stones that deceive the eyes by how quickly they are moved around, or to astound the spectators by dancing with manifold and androgynous contortions, as to speak and hear something novel and contrived about God. Piety was still considered to consist in the simple and noble manner of discourse. But since then the likes of Sextus and Pyrrho and the

> language of antithesis have infected our churches like some terrible and noxious plague. And talkativeness seemed like culture, and as the *Book of Acts* says about Athens, we enjoy spending our time on nothing so much as speaking and listening to something novel … Arius, the namesake of the madness, began this insanity.

Gregory here equates the rhetorical style of Arian theologians with well-known tropes of cultural decay, particularly lascivious dancing, that bugbear beloved of Stoic and Christian moralizers.[15] The seductive dancer was of course a popular metaphor used as shorthand for various forms of decadence, but Gregory's use of the trope here may owe something to one model in particular: the Athenian sojourn of Apollonius of Tyana, as narrated by Philostratus (*VA* 4.21):

> Ἐπιπλῆξαι δὲ λέγεται περὶ Διονυσίων Ἀθηναίοις, ἃ ποιεῖταί σφισιν ἐν ὥρᾳ τοῦ ἀνθεστηριῶνος· ὁ μὲν γὰρ μονῳδίας ἀκροασομένους καὶ μελοποιίας παραβάσεών τε καὶ ῥυθμῶν, ὁπόσοι κωμῳδίας τε καὶ τραγῳδίας εἰσίν, ἐς τὸ θέατρον ξυμφοιτᾶν ᾤετο, ἐπεὶ δὲ ἤκουσεν, ὅτι αὐλοῦ ὑποσημήναντος λυγισμοὺς ὀρχοῦνται καὶ μεταξὺ τῆς Ὀρφέως ἐποποιίας τε καὶ θεολογίας τὰ μὲν ὡς Ὧραι, τὰ δὲ ὡς Νύμφαι, τὰ δὲ ὡς Βάκχαι πράττουσιν, ἐς ἐπίπληξιν τούτου κατέστη καὶ "παύσασθε" εἶπεν "ἐξορχούμενοι τοὺς Σαλαμινίους καὶ πολλοὺς ἑτέρους κειμένους ἀγαθοὺς ἄνδρας …"
>
> He is said to have rebuked the Athenians over the Dionysia, which they celebrate at the time of Anthesterion. He thought that they were frequenting the theater to hear solos and lyrics, addresses to the audience, and the meters proper to tragedy and comedy. But when he heard that they were dancing sinuously to the call of the pipe, and in between the lofty verse and religious poetry of Orpheus were acting now as the Seasons, or the Nymphs, or as Bacchants, he undertook to denounce all this. "Stop burlesquing the men of Salamis", he said, "and many other brave souls, now buried …"[16]

Apollonius, like Gregory, criticizes society for creating a moral or aesthetic equivalency between dance and the performance of theology. We can point in particular to lexical similarities as well: compare Gregory's κατορχεῖσθαι τῶν

15 See especially Webb (2008).

16 I use here the Loeb translation of Jones (2006: 363).

θεατῶν παντοίοις καὶ ἀνδρογύνοις λυγίσμασι with Philostratus' λυγισμοὺς ὀρχοῦνται. The Athenians put on choral dances side-by-side with performances of theology and Orphic poetry (τῆς Ὀρφέως ἐποποιίας τε καὶ θεολογίας), while Gregory complains that, when the Church was healthy, it frowned equally upon dancing and the improper performance of theology (περὶ Θεοῦ λέγειν τι καὶ ἀκούειν καινότερον καὶ περίεργον). To be sure, the gyrations of seductive dancers are a favorite image across a wide variety of polemical and moralizing texts, and we could point to a number of passages outside of Philostratus' *Vita Apollonii* that might have served as plausible models for Gregory. However, we should note that Gregory's text shares with Philostratus here not only lexical similarities but also a parallel narrative structure: Gregory and Apollonius are both provincial Cappadocians, and thus at first glance in the position of the outsider, and they both journey to cultural centers, Constantinople and Athens respectively, which they accuse of decadence and try to recall to their former cultural virtue. This is a virtue to which they, as cultural outsiders, paradoxically have the better claim.[17] To draw on Roshan Abraham's discussion, Gregory, like Apollonius, orientalizes the religious and cultural trends of the center and finds in the geographical periphery (his own Cappadocia) a more faithful adherence to religious norms. As a final argument for the resonance of Philostratus' depiction of Athens in Gregory's text, we should note that Gregory explicitly mentions Athens by invoking its appearance in the *Book of Acts*, where the city plays of course to type. Gregory's rhetorical strategy in his presentation of the origins of Arianism is of a piece with his assimilation of George of Cappadocia to Dionysius' cartoonish depiction of Asianist rhetoric. In each case, he attacks religious heresy with a discourse of cultural degeneracy, a discourse he inherited from an earlier generation's aesthetic controversies.

We turn now to study an episode in the *Nachleben* of Gregory's adaptation of Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Gregory's orations were among the most popular texts in subsequent centuries.[18] Their importance was officially recognized in

17 See Abraham (2014: 475–474): "In his encounters with the Athenians, Ionians, and Spartans, Apollonius sees their behavior through an ethnographic lens, so that the loss of self-knowledge correlates to a fall from civilized, Greek culture to that of uncivilized barbarians … A secondary consequence of representing the periphery as a kind of Second Sophistic utopia is the transformation of the periphery into the center". See also id. (466): "Philostratus reverses the traditional ethnocentric understanding of center and periphery, allowing him to harmonize the distant, and therefore dangerous, East with normative Hellenistic culture. This reversal aids his larger criticism of the state of culture in the Greek world".

18 For the popularity of Gregory's orations in Byzantium, see Noret (1983: 259–266).

the 10th century when a corpus of sixteen homilies, known as the liturgical homilies and including the encomium on Athanasius, were selected to be read out in church services on their respective feast days.[19] Their cultural canonization had begun long before, however, as had their literary influence on a wide variety of texts. Particularly influential were Gregory's characterizations of heresy, and we can see this process at work already in the fifth century. It was during this century that Gregory became known as "the Theologian"—a title conferred upon him at the Council of Chalcedon, when he was cited as an authority on Scripture. In what follows we turn to a text attributed to one of the participants at that council, Theodoret of Cyrus, to demonstrate the influence of Gregory's depictions of heresy, as well as to uncover another as-yet unknown episode in the afterlife of Dionysius' classic account of the rise and fall of Asianism.

A major player in the fifth-century Christological disputes, Theodoret of Cyrus was one of the most learned and prolific authors of his time.[20] After losing his bishopric for Nestorian sympathies in the so-called "Robber Council" of 449, Theodoret was restored during the Council of Chalcedon in 451 only after agreeing to anathematize his former ally Nestorius, whose teachings had been condemned at the Council of Ephesus in 431. Theodoret's personal experience of the Church's doctrinal vicissitudes between Ephesus and Chalcedon afforded him a privileged vantage point from which to survey the full range of heretical doctrines. His contribution to heresiology, the *Haereticarum Fabularum Compendium*, was written shortly after Chalcedon in 452 or 453.[21] As a "consummate stylist" endowed with "an enormous amount of theological learning",[22] Theodoret had a number of literary tools at his disposal, and his relationship to the Classical literary tradition and in particular Platonism has been the subject of two recent full-length studies.[23]

19 For the Byzantine reception of Gregory, see Papaioannou (2013: 56–63).

20 For Theodoret's life and writings see Pasztori-Kupan (2006) as well as Papadogiannakis (2012: 1–5).

21 For an introduction to the *Compendium*, its chronology and place within Theodoret's oeuvre, as well as translation of select passages, see Pasztori-Kupan (2006: 198–220). For the *Compendium* see also Sillett (2000: 261–273), and Cameron (2003: 477–478) for its place within heresiological literature. For Theodoret's treatment of Nestorius at the end of the final book of the *Compendium*, see Sillett (2000: 272). The text of the *Compendium* is available in Migne (PG 83 336–556) and still awaits a critical edition; for an English translation of Migne's text see Cope (1990).

22 Papadogiannakis (2012: 4–5).

23 In addition to Papadogiannakis (2012), see also Siniossoglou (2008).

We are interested in a passage from the fourth book of the *Compendium* which gives an account of the rise of Nestorius and his fall from grace after Ephesus. The section is of particular interest for several reasons: in addition to being a damning account of Theodoret's former ally, the entire passage also appears almost entirely word for word in a second text purporting to belong to Theodoret, the *Letter against Nestorius to Sporacius*, which is addressed to the dedicatee of the *Compendium* (PG 83.1153–1164). The fact that the *Letter* is known to be spurious has led to a general suspicion of the authenticity of the passage on Nestorius in the *Compendium* itself.[24] In what follows I will be focusing on the language of the passage, and will continue to refer to our author as Theodoret for the sake of convenience, but by doing so I do not intend either to affirm or deny Theodoret's authorship of the passage in question.

Our author draws on what will now be familiar language in order to characterize Nestorius as an arch-heretic and enemy of the Church (for the sake of easy comparison I include the text from Gregory's oration in brackets):

> Νεστόριον που πάντως ἀκούετε· καὶ γὰρ ἐπίσημος ὁ ἀνήρ. Οὗτος ἐκ τῆς Γερμανικέων πολίχνης ὁρμώμενος [*Or.* 21.16 ἐκ τῶν ἐσχατιῶν τῶν ἡμετέρων ὁρμώμενον] οὐκ οἶδα ποταποῖς τὸ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐντεθραμμένος ἐπιτηδεύμασιν, ἄλλην ἐξ ἄλλης ἀμείβων χώραν [ἄλλην ἐξ ἄλλης ἀμείβων χώραν καὶ πόλιν], καθάπερ Αἰγυπτιακή τις μάστιξ [οἷόν τις Αἰγυπτιακὴ πληγὴ], τῇ μεγάλῃ ὧν Ἀντιοχέων ἐνέσκηψε πόλει [τὴν Ἀλεξανδρέων καταλαμβάνει]. Ἐν ταύτῃ λόγων ἐλευθερίων μετρίως μετεσχηκὼς [οὐ λόγων ἐλευθερίων μετεσχηκὼς], φωνήν τε ὅτι καλλίστην καὶ μεγίστην ἀσκήσας, τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ προϊὼν εἰσεφθάρη [*Or.* 21.12 γλῶσσα, ὥσπερ τι νόσημα δεινὸν καὶ κακόηθες, ταῖς Ἐκκλησίαις ἡμῶν εἰσεφθάρη].[25]
>
> You have surely heard of Nestorius, for the man is famous. Originating in the town of Germanicia, and at first occupied in I don't know in what sort of pursuits, he moved from country to country, and like some Egyptian scourge settled upon the great city of the Antiochians. Having obtained in this city a moderate share of liberal education, and after cultivating a very fine and powerful speaking voice, he entered into the church of God and corrupted it …

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24 See Pasztori-Kupan (2006: 255 n. 9).

25 PG 83 433.7–15.

As Gregory had followed Dionysius in constructing a seedy biography for George of Cappadocia, so Theodoret follows Gregory in sketching the backstory of an even greater heresiarch, Nestorius of Antioch, Bishop of Constantinople. First, Theodoret begins with Nestorius' obscure place of birth, following Gregory even as far as the lexical level (cf. Theodoret's ἐκ τῆς Γερμανικέων πολίχνης ὁρμώμενος with Gregory's ἐκ τῶν ἐσχατιῶν τῶν ἡμετέρων ὁρμώμενον). Theodoret lifts straight from Gregory the entire phrase "moved from country to country" (ἄλλην ἐξ ἄλλης ἀμείβων χώραν), and likewise the simile "like some Egyptian scourge" (καθάπερ Αἰγυπτιακή τις μάστιξ) is carefully modeled on Gregory's "as if some Egyptian plague" (οἷόν τις Αἰγυπτιακὴ πληγή). Both Theodoret and Gregory then describe the installation of their subjects in their episcopal sees, and "Theodoret" follows Gregory in referring to the city by the toponym of its inhabitants (τῇ μεγάλῃ τῶν Ἀντιοχέων ἐνέσκηψε πόλει/ τὴν Ἀλεξανδρέων καταλαμβάνει). Theodoret then describes Nestorius' education in Antioch, and he bases his phrasing on Gregory's, though here it is the description of Nestorius' "participation" in education (λόγων ἐλευθερίων μετρίως μετεσχηκώς) that is based in George's "lack of participation" (οὐ λόγων ἐλευθερίων μετεσχηκώς). Theodoret then describes the powerful eloquence of Nestorius and how through it he corrupted the Church (φωνήν ... τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ προϊὼν εἰσεφθάρη). For his source here we can point to a passage a few paragraphs earlier in Gregory's oration where Gregory describes how Arian rhetoric has corrupted the church and theological discourse (γλῶσσα ... ταῖς Ἐκκλησίαις ἡμῶν εἰσεφθάρη). Once again Theodoret has carefully imitated his source, using precisely the same verb form to describe how Nestorius "corrupted" (εἰσεφθάρη) the Church. Finally, Theodoret has Nestorius' "voice" (φωνή) corrupt the Church, just as Gregory describes how Arian "language" (γλῶσσα) corrupts the Church.

If we look further back in Theodoret to the passage leading up to the section on Nestorius, we find that the description of the development of the Nestorian heresy itself is based on Gregory's account of the rise of Arianism. Nestorius introduces the denial of Christ's complete divinity, and confounds the faith which was "simple and lacking in artifice" through "Hellenic sophistries" (τὸ ἁπλοῦν καὶ ἀτεχνολόγητον τῆς πίστεως ἡμῶν Ἑλληνικοῖς συνταράττων σοφίσμασι).[26] Compare this to Gregory's description of the state of the Church and theological discourse before the incursion of Arianism (*Or.* 21.12):

26 PG 83.433.5–6.

> τὸ μὲν περιττὸν τοῦτο καὶ κατεγλωττισμένον τῆς θεολογίας καὶ ἔντεχνον οὐδὲ πάροδον εἶχεν εἰς τὰς θείας αὐλάς ... τὸ δὲ ἁπλοῦν τε καὶ εὐγενὲς τοῦ λόγου εὐσέβεια ἐνομίζετο. Ἀφ' οὗ δὲ Σέξτοι καὶ Πύρρωνες καὶ ἡ ἀντίθετος γλῶσσα, ὥσπερ τι νόσημα δεινὸν καὶ κακόηθες, ταῖς Ἐκκλησίας ἡμῶν εἰσεφθάρη ...
>
> This vain, affected and artificial form of theology did not even have access to the divine halls ... and piety was believed to consist in the simple and noble form of speech. But since then the likes of Sextus and Pyrrho and the language of antithesis have infected our churches like some terrible and noxious plague.

Theodoret builds his description of the faith as "simple and lacking-in-artifice" (τὸ ἁπλοῦν καὶ ἀτεχνολόγητον τῆς πίστεως) by selectively combining lexical elements from Gregory's contrast between the "vain, affected and artificial form of theology" of the Arians (περιττὸν τοῦτο καὶ κατεγλωττισμένον τῆς θεολογίας καὶ ἔντεχνον) and "the simple and noble form of speech" in the Orthodox tradition (τὸ δὲ ἁπλοῦν τε καὶ εὐγενὲς τοῦ λόγου). We should note in particular how Theodoret follows Gregory's construction, with both using substantivized neuter adjectives to qualify the nouns "faith" on the one hand (τῆς πίστεως), and "theology" (τῆς θεολογίας) and "speech" (τοῦ λόγου) on the other. Finally, Gregory demonizes Arian rhetoric by claiming it has corrupted true theology through its use of the Greek philosophical discourses of skepticism (identified through its representatives Sextus and Pyrrho) and dialectic. Theodoret simplifies this by condensing Gregory's "the likes of Sextus and Pyrrho and the language of antithesis" into "Hellenic sophistries". Theodoret represents Nestorianism as simply another manifestation of Arianism, which like its predecessor corrupts legitimate theological discourse through the sophistries of Greek philosophy, just as the sophistries of Asianism had displaced and corrupted genuine Attic rhetoric.

We have seen that Dionysius' construction of the Asianism-Atticism polarity enjoyed a productive afterlife in the Christian polemical tradition. This is due in particular to the influence of Gregory of Nazianzus, who in this respect as in so many others was responsible for giving new life to a specific Classical literary discourse by channeling it into the Christian tradition. Dionysius offered the perfect template for constructing and then discrediting a discursive tradition by presenting it not only as suspect in its use of language but from the perspective of morals and class as well. Gregory uses the categories of upstart Asianist and legitimate Atticist rhetoric to frame his account of the conflict between the Arian George of Cappadocia and Athanasius, the legitimate bishop of Alexandria. Gregory's narrative is then easily recycled by Theodoret to de-legitimize

Nestorius (who was of course the bête noire of another orthodox bishop of Alexandria, namely Cyril) and represent Nestorianism as just another version of Arianism. Gregory, and in turn Theodoret, are able to transform a rhetoric of cultural and social orthodoxy into one of theological orthodoxy.

CHAPTER 7

Rhetoric against the Theatre and Theatre by Means of Rhetoric in John Chrysostom

Leonardo Lugaresi

As into a furnace, the devil throws the city into the theatre.[1]

It is generally known that the polemic against spectacles plays a leading role in John Chrysostom's works, to such an extent that it can be regarded as a cornerstone of his preaching:[2] this tendency, however, is linked with another, namely his marked propensity to theatrical rhetoric. The fact that he keeps evoking themes and images of the theatre in his speeches makes this plainly evident, while, among other things, he frequently employs motives, examples, and modes of expression that can in different ways be traced back to the very world of spectacles that he rejects and condemns.[3] His rhetorical production

1 John Chrysostom, *De paenitentia homiliae*, 6,1 (PG 49, 315): Καθάπερ γὰρ εἰς κάμινόν τινα εἰς τὸ θέατρον τὴν πόλιν ἐμβαλὼν ὁ διάβολος …

2 To thoroughly deal with the topic, and list of references, see Lugaresi (2008: 695–812), which supplies the interpretative framework within which this essay is to be placed. To the critical literature there quoted, it is now possible to add Jacob (2010), the result of research work conducted in the early 90's, published posthumously many years after the author's premature demise in 1996.

3 Recent historiography seems by now to share the emphasis on this aspect of Chrysostom's rhetoric, at least starting from Leyerle's book, that pointed out how (Leyerle 2001: 206) "the use of theatrical imagery was a powerful polemical strategy" in his fight against the so-called spiritual marriage (i.e. male and female ascetics living together). Leyerle affirms that (2001: 208–209) "Chrysostom captures the vigor of spoken word by his sustained reliance on theatrical tropes and images. He refutes the performance of the couples with a performance of his own". From that point of view, one exceeds the statement—that can be shared—with which Miles concludes his article (2003: 114–115): "The theatrical imagery used by John emerges from this survey as a startling indicator of the extent to which the Church fathers naturally turned to the cultural icons of the classical, non-Christian past in order to communicate

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appears therefore to express a way of thinking radically opposed to all kinds of theatrical performance in forms that often lean towards "theatricality".[4] However, there is no contradiction between ideological content and communicative form, since both contribute, wholly in accordance with the author's cast of mind, toward the attainment of a well-defined cultural and pastoral goal.

This article aims at establishing a clear picture of the connection between the fight against spectacles as a fundamental theological-ethical theme in

with their own congregations". Hartney (2004: 49–50) speaks of "a sense of Church preaching as an entertainment medium on the part of the Christian laity", which leads preachers like Chrysostom to adopt "the style of oratory best calculated to interest and entertain the secular audience" that entails, among other things, the use of "vivid imagery". He goes as far as to define what Chrysostom prepares for his audience (2004: 140) "a kind of microcosmic theatre, contained within a sermon". Piccaluga (2005: 482) speaks of an "assunzione, per lo meno sul piano formale e stilistico, da parte dell'omileta, di quella stessa teatralità che continua, per altro, a combattere tenacemente in ambito dottrinario". In spite of the title, Permar Smith's analysis (2007: 65–79), besides being fairly superficial, does not treat this aspect. Finally, see Rylaarsdam (2014: 228–269) on the visualization of images in Chrysostom's homiletic technique.

4 Defining *theatricality*, as generally known, is a complex and somehow evasive task, if we recognize with Burns (1972: 13) that from the socio-cultural perspective "Theatricality is not [...] a behaviour or expression, but attaches to any kind of behaviour perceived and interpreted by others and described (mentally or explicitly) in theatrical terms". More recently, the editors of an important collection of essays on this subject do agree that it is impossible to provide a univocal definition and declare instead their intention (Davis-Postlewait 2003: 3) "to investigate the wide range of possible applications (and misapplications)" of the concept. For a comprehensive overview and a specific bibliography, see the monographic issue (98–99) of *SubStance* (31) 2002, edited by Feral. In the latest decades the concept of theatricality has been widely and in different ways applied in the study of the Hellenistic-Roman and late antique world: suffice it to recall here Bartsch (1994), the articles by Slater (1995) and Chaniotis (1997) and more recently the book by Samellas (2010: 19–66). In the context of this article the term is not used so much to refer to the performative dimension (*actio*) of Chrysostom's oratory, as in connection with his tendency to produce virtual performances by means of rhetoric (often employing materials from the world of spectacles), conceived to be set in motion by his listeners on their "interior stage". That way, in the orator's intention, they become spectators-interpreters in a kind of mental theatre, whose success crucially depends also on the use of elements of theatre technique in his performance. But here we merely touch on that aspect. About the attention directed by Chrysostom and other fourth century Church fathers toward the performative dimension of rhetoric and their resumption of precepts concerning the *actio*, also in order to stress the ascetic and doctrinal distance between orthodox "good bishops" and heretical or pagan "bad teachers", who preach in a basely theatrical way, see Quiroga Puertas (2013c).

Chrysostom's homiletics and the theatricality of his rhetoric. More specifically, we will try here to better understand the relationship between word and image and, as a result, between "exterior stage" (meant as the theatrical public space where secular spectacles are actually played),[5] and what we will call "interior stage", i.e. the sort of individual mental space in which each spectator projects and somehow processes the *simulacra* experienced in the theatre. In Chrysostom's thought, that interior space becomes the ground on which the Christian preacher fights his battle to rescue each and every believer's soul from the fiendish influence of spectacles by staging another type of performance, based on the sheer strength of rhetoric in the sacred space of a church, opposed in content and nature to profane spectacles. Christians can thus profit from another "spectacle" by listening to and reflecting on the preacher's words, following what we could call director's suggestions, enjoying a completely spiritual experience, able to purify the soul from contamination by the profane *ludi*: in a sense, they go through an "anti-theatrical" experience whose psychagogic force is at least as strong as and opposed to the one they went through in the theatre.

1 Phenomenology of the Contagion through Spectacles: From the Stage to the Psyche

The relationship between the exterior and the interior stage is most complex and plays a decisive role in the whole treatment of the question of spectacles in John Chrysostom. As a matter of fact, theatrical spectacles are considered by him so dangerous as to require a blanket condemnation and a nearly obsessive prophylaxis, the more so because it does not solely remain outside the spectator's person—which in a way is a paradox, since the separation between spectator and actor is an institutional element of the theatrical performance itself—but has the power to penetrate his mind and double itself into a kind of "interior spectacle" endowed with an irresistible psychagogic force. This type of contagion by spectacles takes place according to a process that he describes and analyses over and over again with great subtlety: it will suffice here to consider but a few examples.

5 Whether dealing with theatre in a strict sense, or rather amphitheatre or circus—but also, occasionally, other places used as venue for spectacles—it does not matter, since the semantic field of θέατρον, as employed by our author, covers all these meanings. See Jacob (2010: 29–33).

In his homily *Contra ludos et theatra*,[6] Chrysostom aims at destroying the line of defence put up by the theatre-goers, who claim that they only go there to have a good time and that they do not come to any harm because they but look on "from above" (i.e. in a detached situation and somehow from a safe distance) what is happening on the stage. Chrysostom rules out the possibility of an "innocent spectator" and poses the rhetorical question (*Contra ludos et theatra* 2, PG 56.266): "how can those who do not refrain from looking on, and on the contrary invest so much energy in watching, remain uncontaminated (ἀκηλίδωτος)?"[7] The truth—he continues—is that the ruinous effects of watching spectacles do not wear off within the brief time boundaries of the duration of the *performance*, on the contrary they drag on to the point of persistently influencing the subjects that exposed themselves to its influence:

> Not only in that precise instant, but also, the spectacle being over, after she [the actress] has left, her image broods in your soul: the words, body movements, glances, gait, rhythm, distinction, whorish songs, and you come away [from the theatre] with a thousand wounds. Do family disruptions not come from that? Is that not the cause of the destruction of temperance, of marriage splitting, arguments and quarrels? Does not unjustified revulsion derive from that? As a matter of fact, after you go back home, completely conquered and held captive by her, your wife seems uglier and unpleasant, the children more irksome and the servants more irritating. The household seems strange and the usual cares, necessary for the housekeeping, seem to annoy you, while whoever approaches you is unwelcome and a nuisance.[8]

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6 Very likely preached in early July 399AD in Constantinople to reproach church-goers who over the previous days had failed to attend the religious services to go to the circus and to the theatre. On the dating and circumstances of this speech, see Mayer (1999).

7 See Lugaresi (2008: 701–702 n. 22).

8 John Chrysostom, *theatr.* 2 (PG 56, 267): Καὶ οὐδὲ κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν ἐκεῖνον μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ θεάτρου λυθέντος, ἀπελθούσης αὐτῆς, τὸ εἴδωλον ἐκείνης ἐναπόκειταί σου τῇ ψυχῇ, τὰ ῥήματα, τὰ σχήματα, τὰ βλέμματα, ἡ βάδισις, ὁ ῥυθμὸς, ἡ διάκρισις, τὰ μέλη τὰ πορνικὰ, καὶ μυρία τραύματα λαβὼν ἀναχωρεῖς. Οὐκ ἐντεῦθεν οἴκων ἀνατροπαί; οὐκ ἐντεῦθεν σοφρωσύνης ἀπώλεια; οὐκ ἐντεῦθεν γάμων διαιρέσεις; οὐκ ἐντεῦθεν πόλεμοι καὶ μάχαι; οὐκ ἐντεῦθεν ἀηδίαι λόγων οὐκ ἔχουσαι; Ἐπειδὰν γὰρ ἐμπλησθεὶς ταύτης ἀνέλθῃς γενόμενος αἰχμάλωτος, καὶ ἡ γυνή σου ἀηδεστέρα φαίνεται, καὶ τὰ παιδία φορτικώτερα, καὶ οἱ οἰκέται ἐπαχθεῖς, καὶ ἡ οἰκία περιττὴ, καὶ αἱ συνήθεις φροντίδες ἐνοχλεῖν δοκοῦσι πρὸς τὴν οἰκονομίαν τῶν δεόντων πραγμάτων, καὶ ἕκαστος προσιὼν φορτικὸς καὶ ἐπαχθής. On the reading of this passage and on the interpretative difficulties of some terms see Lugaresi

Therefore, in the theatre, while the performance was taking place, the spectators felt safe and in a way protected precisely because of their situation, institutionally immune from any moral responsibility: indeed, in the culture of the late antique *polis* the *infamia* of the spectacle, to the extent that it existed (more in the Roman world than in the Greek), lay entirely with the actor and did not in the least implicate the spectators. "Sitting high" (ἄνω καθήμενος)—as Chrysostom had pointed out shortly before—the spectator thought he could safely look onto the "female prostitute" (γυναῖκα πόρνην) placed below.[9] She displays herself at the centre of the performative space and in the focal point where thousands of eyes (mainly male) converge, but she is separated by the invisible barrier dividing the actor's world (the stage) from the spectator's (the *cavea* and occasionally the orchestra, when occupied by the audience). In its double effect of enlarging and distancing, the "stage machinery" heightens the intensity of the vision while at the same time, paradoxically, being a contrivance that allows us spectators to think that what we see *there*, on the stage, does not "regard" us; not only in the sense that it does not involve our responsibility, but also in the sense that it "does not direct its regard toward us" (relations in a spectacle do not envisage reciprocity: he who is looked at does not look back, and vice versa he who looks is not looked at). We as spectators do not have to answer for what we watch and, if that is so, we are also led to believe that what we see will not affect us deep down, will not penetrate internally, into our conscience, but will remain an external phenomenon.

According to Chrysostom that is not at all so, and this false belief is itself part of the game of theatrical deception: it enables the spectators to presume they are immune but disguises the fact that, after the exterior performance where we have "only" been spectators, another will inevitably begin for all of us and will take place entirely on the interior stage, where the images absorbed in the theatre come into action in the individual memory and give life to a second *performance*, from which, now, there is no way we can distance ourselves, because it takes place *inside* us and is our own work. This "mental theatre" is not subject to the limits of external performances and is able, in its turn, to operate from the interior to the exterior, thus triggering a most dangerous

(2008: 707–708, n. 42). Essentially similar descriptions can also be found elsewhere, e.g. *hom. in Mt.* 68, 4 (PG 58, 645).

9 John Chrysostom, *Theatr.* 2 (PG 56, 266). As observed, in connection with something else, by Mayer (1997: 111): "in his own mind the connection between being seated and being of elevated status is patent". In addition to the element of the spectator's illusory "regal" superiority in our case there is the element of his passivity: he who sits does not act, he only watches somebody else acting.

dynamic that disrupts real relationships and everyday situations. In the example given by Chrysostom, the physical presence of the prostitute-actress[10]—not only and not so much the one who actually performed in the theatre, rather her even more seductive imaginary re-enactment—occupies the mind of him whom we can now call "permanent spectator", and estranges him from the normal tissue of social relations: no longer a citizen, a husband, a family man. From his supposed situation of control, the spectator is thus plunged in a situation of submission, incompatible with his dignity as a Christian, and as a citizen.

The steps of this pervasive process are analysed by the author with even more precision in the next passage, from a homily on the *First Epistle to the Thessalonians*:

> When you go to the theatre and sit there feasting your eyes with naked women's bodies, for the time being you take pleasure, but then as a result you fuel a very high fever. When you see women that look like body images, spectacles and songs that show but improper love affairs—she loves him but unrequited and hangs herself, absurd love passions laid on mothers—when through your hearing you take in such things, and through women, images, also of men in advanced years (in fact many of them, wearing masks, play women's parts), how will you be able, tell me, to stay chaste while those stories, those visions, the things you have heard occupy your soul, and then when your dreams receive it in turn?[11]

The starting point is once more that of the apparent safety of the "seated" spectator (i.e. a situation symbolising the state of superiority and immunity conferred on him by the convention of spectacles), intent on feasting his eyes (τοὺς

10 On the connection between these two terms, see Jacob (2010: 88–93).

11 John Chrysostom, *hom. in 1Thess.* 5, 4 (PG 62, 428): Ὅταν γὰρ ἀνέλθῃς εἰς θέατρον, καὶ καθίσῃς γυμνοῖς μέλεσι γυναικῶν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἑστιῶν, πρὸς μὲν καιρὸν ἥσθης, ὕστερον δὲ πολὺν ἐκεῖθεν ἔθρεψας τὸν πυρετόν. Ὅταν ἴδῃς ὥσπερ σώματος τύπῳ γυναῖκας φαινομένας, ὅταν καὶ θεάματα καὶ ᾄσματα μηδὲν ἕτερον ἀλλ᾽ἢ ἔρωτας ἀτόπους ἔχοντα, Ἡ δεῖνα, φησὶ, τὸν δεῖνα ἐφίλησε, καὶ οὐκ ἐπέτυχε, καὶ ἀπήγξατο, καὶ εἰς μητέρας τοὺς ἀτόπους ἔρωτας ἐκκυλισθέντας· ὅταν καὶ δι᾽ἀκοῆς ταῦτα δέχῃ, καὶ διὰ γυναικῶν, καὶ διὰ τύπων, ἤδη δὲ καὶ διὰ γερόντων ἀνδρῶν (καὶ πολλοὶ προσωπεῖα περιθέντες ἑαυτοῖς ἐκεῖ γυναικίζονται), πόθεν, εἰπέ μοι, δυνήσῃ σωφρονῆσαι λοιπὸν, ἐκείνων τῶν διηγημάτων, ἐκείνων τῶν θεαμάτων, ἐκείνων τῶν ἀκουσμάτων κατεχόντων σου τὴν ψυχὴν, καὶ ὀνείρων τοιούτων διαδεχομένων λοιπόν;

ὀφθαλμοὺς ἑστιῶν) with the pleasure provided by the sight of female nudity. This "consumption" of female bodies is denounced by Chrysostom as the cause of real illness, like the metaphor of a fever clearly suggests, in spite of the fact that in the general opinion it might be considered not a very commendable habit but surely not a dangerous one either. Actually, it was socially considered completely acceptable since it was limited to the space-time of spectacles, it employed *infamous* bodies like those of prostitute-actresses, and it did not infringe upon the sphere of the normal family and of civil relations.

It is a spiritual illness that intensely involves also the body. The semiotics of the symptoms of this disease is given in even more detail by John in an extract from his homily *In sanctum Barlaam martyrem*, where, while urging his listeners to acquire an "agonistic" view of Christian life, he invites everybody, males and females, to take up arms and fight the good battle following the example of the martyr here commended and evokes by contrast the "feebleness" of those used to attending spectacles.

> Can you not see how soft those who return from the theatre have become? The reason is that they applied themselves intensively to what was happening there. Indeed they leave the theatre like that, having impressed in their soul rotations of eyeballs, writhing of hands, circular movements of feet and the imprints of all the images that are revealed in the contortion of a body made flexible.[12]

It is of interest to note that we are presented here with a surprising mirror image, in the body of the spectator, of the physiology of the actor's body, a body which by definition is described as "liquid" and protean, of uncertain identity because able to feign all, whose soft pliability at the same time fascinates and disturbs the audience.[13] Those coming back from the theatre, as described by Chrysostom, have in fact unknowingly taken on the "suppleness" that so attracted them in the "acting bodies" of mimes and pantomimes, but which civic morals encourage them to despise outside the theatrical dimension. Going to the theatre to gaze at those bodies, the preacher seems to suggest, one is assimilated to them by an inevitable process of inadvertent mimesis.

12 John Chrysostom, *pan. Barl. mart.* 4 (PG 50, 682): Οὐχ ὁρᾶτε τοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν θεάτρων καταβαίνοντας μαλακωτέρους γινομένους; τὸ δὲ αἴτιον, ὅτι μετὰ σπουδῆς τοῖς ἐκεῖ γινομένοις προσέχουσι· καὶ γὰρ ὀφθαλμῶν περιστροφάς, καὶ χειρῶν περιδονήσεις, καὶ ποδῶν κύκλους, καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐν τῇ διαστροφῇ τοῦ λυγισθέντος σώματος φανέντων εἰδώλων τοὺς τύπους ἐναποθέμενοι ταῖς ψυχαῖς οὕτως ἀπέρχονται.

13 See Lugaresi (2005).

Without knowing anything about mirror-neurons, he seems to have guessed something of the complex mechanisms linking vision with the motor and postural functions of the body, about which only nowadays we are beginning to understand.[14]

Going back to the excerpt from the fifth homily on 1 Thess, we observe that according to John Chrysostom the effect produced by exposure to the influence of spectacles is that the spectator, under the pressure of the multisensory stimuli absorbed in great quantity in the theatre, ends up by distorting his perception of reality and no longer sees women, i.e. subjects, persons, but only bodies or better said sequences of body shapes (ὥσπερ σώματος τύπῳ γυναῖκας φαινομένας) that pile up in his memory. These τύποι, these sensory imprints, can even be without a counterpart in external reality (as suggested, not by chance, by the hint at the fact that many of them could have been produced not by women or young men, but by elderly male actors *en travesti*), anyhow they can "occupy the soul" and even extend their effect to the dream activity. The final result of this "occupation" is for the spectator the impossibility of staying pure, of σωφρονεῖν, which we translated above with "staying chaste," but which could equally well be translated with "keeping control over oneself", since in Christian ethic the value of chasteness includes the classical ideal of self-possession.[15] Hence we have reached the complete reversal of the image of the sovereign-spectator, watching from above the drama performance (which, mind you, can be lethal for the actor, as in the case of *munera gladiatoria* or *venationes*, and always involves total commitment on the part of the performer), enjoying, although in a vicarious and temporary way, the privilege of sovereignty, i.e. the

14 To the softness unexpectedly infused into the male bodies of the spectator-citizens, our author juxtaposes the virilising effect, if we can thus describe it, of the image of the martyr's body evoked by his words: painted in everybody's heart (women included!) it has the purpose of maintaining always toned up the Christian athlete, i.e. the soldier each Christian ought to be (*pan. Barl. mart.* 4 PG 50, 682): "[he] shall not admire an easy and dissolute life, but a hard, tense and fighting one (οὐ θαυμάσεται τὸν ὑγρὸν καὶ διαλελυμένον βίον, ἀλλὰ τὸν σκληρὸν, καὶ εὔτονον, καὶ ἐναγώνιον)". The contrast is reintroduced in *Hom. martyr.* (PG 50, 665–666): "as those returning from the theatre appear to everybody disturbed, confused, weak (μαλακιζόμενοι), bearing [in their mind] the images of everything that happened there (τὰ εἴδωλα πάντων τῶν ἐκεῖ γεγενημένων φέροντες), likewise he who returns from the contemplation of martyrs should be recognizable by everybody, by his eyes, his looks, his gait, his compunction and the concentration of his mind".

15 See North (1966: 312–379) about the development of the concept in the patristic period, but without reference to our author.

faculty to decide on someone else's life or death.[16] Anything but a sovereign, the spectator, according to Chrysostom, ends up enslaved by the images that have taken possession of him.

We said images, but on this point it is necessary to be more precise: if in the passage from the homily *Contra ludos et theatra* the influence of spectacles seemed limited to the visual channel,[17] here it is in fact explicitly said that the contagion also spreads "through hearing".[18] It is well known that one of the decisive factors of the greater emotional impact of theatrical spectacles compared to other means of communication, like figurative art and oratory, lies precisely in its multisensoriality. However, according to Chrysostom, even if the ἀκοή plays an important role in the contamination process started by spectacles, that does not mean that words, or better said discourse, carry greater weight. Certainly, in addition to the θεάματα and the ἀκούσματα (which can in first place be sound and music impressions) he numbers among the elements of theatrical fascination also the διηγήματα, i.e. narrations, tales and stories. It is of interest to note that, in evoking the plots of performances, he stylizes to the utmost degree and nearly distorts them by flattening them in an elementary repetitive seriality ("she loves him unrequited and hangs herself") that highlights their ἀτοπία, i.e. the absurdity, the lack of meaning.

The strength of the late antique theatre (which has almost nothing in common with the classical genres of tragedy and comedy)—Chrysostom seems to mean—certainly does not reside here: surely it is not thanks to the com-

16 See Lugaresi (2008: 150–156).

17 About the pre-eminence of sight, which could appear to be sufficient reason to explain the greater seductive power of spectacles compared with verbal teaching, Chrysostom's position is complex. There is no doubt that, as stated by Jacob (2010: 23): "der Prediger von Antiochia und Konstantinopel war sehr sensibel für die Lust des Schauens und für die darin liegende Überzeugungskraft". Suffice it here to quote on this point *hom. in Jo.* 56,2 (PG 59, 308), where it is asserted that the eye shows more than anything else divine power, as it governs the whole body and is for our body what the sun is for the world; in case the eye dies out all the other limbs and even the soul become useless because the eye is the lamp not just of the body, but also of the soul—on the other hand, we should not forget that he simultaneously affirms the superiority of the word over the image. See Bugar (2005), although he deals exclusively with the static images of figurative art, not with the "animated" ones of the theatre.

18 Think of Alypius' case, in Augustine, *Conf.* 6, 8, 13: dragged by his friends into the amphitheatre, he tries to resist the contagion of the spectacle by keeping his eyes shut, but is defeated by *curiositas* when he hears the crowd shout, and Augustine remarks: *ille clausis foribus oculorum interdixit animo, ne in tanta mala procederet. Atque utinam et aures obturavisset!* For an analysis of this Augustinian passage, see Lugaresi (2008: 572–576).

plexity of its plots, depth of its characters or appeal of its dialogues that it exerts such a powerful influence on the audience.[19] Moreover, its very nature of mass entertainment, ideologically uncommitted, encourages a misunderstanding and lends itself to a certain line of defence of spectacles that must have been raised within Christian communities: according to this argument, it is because they are after all just *nugae*, pastimes without any cultural dignity, that spectacles do not deserve such hostile attention on the part of the Church hierarchy.[20] Chrysostom does not explicitly counter this insidious objection, but he in fact shows that he knows very well that the grave perils of spectacles are not posed by their ideological content but by their power of suggestion, which is even increased by the relative marginality of their logical-rhetorical dimension. It is true that there are no great anti-Christian *logoi* in those spectacles,[21] indeed it is through the pre-eminence of sensuality that the pervasiveness of spectacles silences the Christian *logos*. It is precisely for this reason that the *logoi* are the most important weapon in the battle against theatres. The sacred orator reacts to the theatrical offensive by employing two powerful rhetorical weapons: on the one hand thanks to the *ekphrasis* of some theatrical situations, moments, or images he can produce the same effects again, but with a "therapeutic" purpose, i.e. to exorcise their diabolical fascination by means of analysis and reflection; on the other hand, with his words he creates on the interior stage, in a manner of speaking, an anti-theatre able to compete in evocative effectiveness with the profane performance, but under an opposing banner: a kind of spiritual theatre consisting only of words. This way the sacred rhetoric is given two purposes, one of deterrence (pointing out the diabolical nature of the other theatre, exorcising it in the sacred space of a church) and the other of spiritual edification (directing the listeners' minds toward the contemplation of the "spiritual spectacles" on the interior stage).

19 See the interpretation (that we deem applicable also to the Imperial age theatre in the Greek-speaking area) that is given of Roman theatre by Dupont (1985; 2000).

20 The presence of this position, almost censored in the Christian writings on spectacles, is certified in particular by Novatian's *De spectaculis* 1.3.

21 A case apart are the anti-Christian mimes mentioned by Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or.* 2.84. On that and the connected hagiographic tradition of the saint mimes, see respectively Lugaresi (1998; 2008: 345–354).

2 Between Images and Words: The Machinery of Spectacles and Its Context

At the root of the reflection on the question of spectacles there is, in John Chrysostom like in all the other Church Fathers that dealt with it, the sense of the fundamental ambiguity regarding the reality or fiction of mimetic performance, i.e. to put it in the same terms as Tertullian, the contradiction between *veritas* and *vanitas*.[22] Spectacles are "vain" in first place in an ontological then in a moral sense, since they do not have real consistency (what we see happen on the stage does not really occur) and their supposed "truth" consists precisely in the fact that they are not what they appear to be. Greek philosophers had already reflected on this disquieting paradox, but Christian thinking tackles it with renewed intensity and finds the cause of the tremendous psychagogic force of spectacles in their being the product of a diabolical *fictio*. Captivated by their fascination, the spectators warm to things that do not actually exist (like *ludi scaenici*) or are completely irrelevant (like *ludi circenses*), but that have the power to mesmerize them, with disastrous social consequences.[23]

Although this theme is common to all patristic writings, a peculiar aspect in Chrysostom's position consists in the particularly clear perception which he has of the danger that the "culture of spectacles" may prove to be more attrac-

22 For a more extensive presentation and demonstration of this thesis, see Lugaresi (2008). On the point of the ambivalence of performances (in all their forms), see Goody (1997). The fundamental argument of *ratio veritatis* in the condemnation of spectacles is clearly enunciated in Tertullian's *De spectaculis*, 1.1.

23 Thus, e.g. Basil of Caesarea, *hom. in Hexaem.* 4, 1,1–3, describes the state of alienation of a city in the grip of spectacles: "There are cities that attract the eyes through all sorts of juggling spectacles from early in the morning to the evening. But also people who listen for a long time to certain bawdy and depraved songs, capable of causing in the soul such dissoluteness that they never have their fill of it. People of that kind are called happy by some, because after abandoning their business in the market or the care of arts useful for life, they spend the span of life allotted to them in complete idleness and pleasure, not knowing that a theatre in which impure spectacles thrive is for those who attend them a school of common and public licentiousness, and that the harmonious melodies of flutes and whorish songs, by insinuating themselves into the soul of all listeners, lead them to nothing else than disgraceful behaviour, i.e. to the imitation of the cithara and flute players' airs. Moreover, there are some who, infatuated with horses, fight for their horses even in dreams, changing chariots, replacing charioteers: in short they do not break away, not even in their night dreams, from the folly obsessing them during the day".

tive and better able to affect even Christians than the culture of the Church,[24] hence his effort to analyse the causes of this phenomenon by referring in real terms to the socio-cultural situation of the time and devoting considerable attention to family life in particular.

He takes the environment factor into consideration, because he thinks that the impact of the theatrical deception, at the moment when it takes place through an external performance (hence, before it reflects onto the interior stage), strictly depends on the context in which it occurs.[25] Chrysostom knows well that the "credibility" of the suggestions offered by the stage is strictly linked to the theatrical chronotope: the mere semblances that on the stage constitute the characters and their theatrical vicissitudes "are alive" only within the given space-time situation, outside of it they immediately lose any consistency. In one of his homilies on Lazarus, he observes that when in the theatre the actors take the stage and one plays the role of a philosopher, another of a king or a servant, a doctor or a teacher (without being any of these things),

> the character's appearance fools [the spectators], but it does not deceive the nature, whose truth it distorts. And as long as the spectators are seated there to be entertained, those masks hold out, but later, when, the night having fallen, the performance is over and everybody goes home, the mask is dropped and he who inside was a king, may be revealed outside to be a coppersmith. The masks have been thrown away, the delusion has disappeared, the truth has become manifest; and it is discovered that

24 We limit ourselves to but one quotation, among the many available: in *hom. in Mt.* 1, 7 (PG 57, 22) Chrysostom, worried about the scant attention paid by his listeners to the "saint and precious things" he deals with, says that there are some "who do not even devote to them as much time as to the prostitutes in Satan's theatres (ταῖς πόρναις γυναιξὶν ἐν τοῖς σατανικοῖς θεάτροις). They spend the day there and neglect many of their family matters because of that unseemly occupation, they carefully preserve what they hear, keeping it for the ruin of their soul. On the contrary here, where God is speaking, they cannot bear to remain even for a short time".

25 See Piccaluga (2005: 485–489). This, of course, is not only true for the theatre, but also for rhetoric: by now there is large consent on the conviction that (Sandwell 2014: 3) "the specific time and place in which an audience listened to preaching would affect how they heard it" and that "identifying the significance of a sermon should thus not simply be a matter of understanding the meaning of the words as written on the page, but should also involve sensitively recreating the original context of delivery". In this sense, also attention to the dimension of "spatial rhetoric" has increased in recent research work on Chrysostom: see Shepardson (2007; 2014).

> those who inside are free, are slaves outside. As I have already stated, in fact, inside there is deception, outside the truth. The night has fallen, the spectacle is over, the truth has emerged.[26]

Therefore we observe at the basis of the theatrical illusion a totally self-referential mechanism, which, in order to function, needs a conventional but complete suspension of the normal relation with reality on the part of the spectator. Once more we can see here at work the relation between "interior stage" and "exterior stage": the spectator, inwardly, opens up to the play fiction a mental space of acquiescence without which it would not be able to succeed; but such an operation is in turn made possible (or at least greatly facilitated) by the fact that the spectator is situated inside a physical space totally connoted by its function of make-believe. Once the θέατρον is over, the characters lose their lustre and revert to the state of mere shadows. At this point there is something else worth noting, and it is the peculiarity of the opposition of the terms *inside* and *outside*, which Chrysostom seems here to define in a different way from the Augustinian opposition of *intus* and *foris* typical of the introspective viewpoint in *Confessions*. On a first level, "inside" refers to the theatre, seen as a closed space, within boundaries and separated from the rest of the public space intended for everyday life; "outside" refers instead to normal life, the one taking place at home, on the *agorà*, in the church, and it is in this sense that he says that "inside there is deception, outside the truth".[27]

Within the theatrical chronotope, on the contrary, the sides are reversed because the "outside" represents the dimension of the outward *fictio* and the "inside" the truth of matters, which it can adulterate but not suppress. So, when Chrysostom says that "he who inside was a king, may be revealed outside to be a coppersmith" he refers to the first level and what he means is that the fake king of the stage carries on a vile trade in everyday life; on the contrary, I think the

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26 John Chrysostom, *in Lazarum*, 6,5 (PG 48, 1035): καὶ ἀπατᾷ ἡ ὄψις τοῦ προσωπείου, ἀλλ᾽οὐ ψεύδεται τὴν φύσιν, ἧς μεταβάλλεται τὴν ἀλήθειαν. Καὶ ἕως μὲν καθέζονται οἱ τερπόμενοι, τὰ προσωπεῖα ἵσταται· ἐπειδὰν δὲ ἑσπέρα καταλάβῃ, καὶ λυθῇ τὸ θέατρον, καὶ πάντες ἀναχωρήσωσι, ῥίπτονται τὰ προσωπεῖα, καὶ ὁ ἔνδον βασιλεὺς εὑρίσκεται ἔξω χαλκότυπος. Ἀπερρίφη τὰ προσωπεῖα, ἀπῆλθεν ἡ ἀπάτη, ἐδείχθη ἡ ἀλήθεια· καὶ εὑρίσκεται ὁ ἔνδον ἐλεύθερος, ἔξω δοῦλος· ὅπερ γὰρ εἶπον, ἔσω μὲν ἡ ἀπάτη, ἔξω δὲ ἡ ἀλήθεια· κατέλαβεν δὲ ἡ ἑσπέρα· ἐλύθη τὸ θέατρον, ἐφάνη ἡ ἀλήθεια.

27 On this level, therefore, the contraposition of values is reversed compared to the Augustinian perspective: it is not a question of going back *inside* to find the truth (just think of the *ecce intus eras et ego foris* in *Conf.* 10, 27,38), but instead of getting *outside* the microcosm of fiction which is the theatre to perceive the true reality of the creation.

expression καὶ εὑρίσκεται ὁ ἔνδον ἐλεύθερος, ἔξω δοῦλος can be interpreted in two ways: the first moves along the previous lines (inside the theatre we have the character, who is a free citizen, but the actor impersonating him, once outside the theatre, reverts to his state of slave), whereas the second inverts the terms, here "outside", i.e. on the stage, we see a servant, but "inside" the character there is a free man who is playing that role.

Though correlated with its places of reference, the influence of spectacles nevertheless does not remain within the time-spatial boundaries institutionally assigned to them, as wide as they can be in big cities keen on *ludi* like Antioch and Constantinople; on the contrary, as already said above, it oversteps them and invades the whole urban space. Theatres thus look like "the furnace into which the devil throws the city", to resume Chrysostom's vivid expression quoted as entry point; or better still, we could say, taking to extremes what he means without fundamentally distorting it, that the entire city has become a huge theatre. That is precisely the scene which, in the rhetorical exaggeration heavy with *pathos* of the opening of his homily *Contra ludos et theatra*, he prompts us to imagine. He begins his speech with a grieved lament because the congregation, notwithstanding his long speeches and the teachings imparted by him over and over again, had abandoned him in the previous days to go and see horse races, cheering so enthusiastically and wildly as "to fill the city with noise and indistinct shouts" (ὥστε πᾶσαν τὴν πόλιν ἐμπλῆσαι βοῆς καὶ κραυγῆς ἀτάκτου) being moved to laughter or tears.[28] The hyperbole of the whole city resounding with the spectators' shouts is intensified by the antithesis of the image of the lonely bishop, sitting at home, listening from a distance to the crowd's clamour, enduring the pains of a survivor from a wreck in the stormy sea, feeling deeply ashamed and dejected.[29] The rhetorical scheme of contraposition ἄλλοι μὲν ... ἐγὼ δὲ is here bent to express a "dramatic" situation of loneliness instead of the proud assertion of one's choice of life.

28 John Chrysostom, *theatr.* 1 (PG 56, 263). The wording used to indicate the bishop's long and profound sermons against theatres, in spite of which the faithful flocked to the call of spectacles (μετὰ μακροὺς διαύλους λόγων, καὶ τοσαύτην διδασκαλίαν), is of special interest because it includes an allusion to spectacles: in fact Chrysostom uses the term δίαυλος, which literally indicates the double course, to and fro, covered by the contestants in the stadium. The long and repeated tirades against spectacles are thus compared to a sporting *performance*, one of those the preacher's rebellious listeners are so keen to watch.

29 John Chrysostom, *theatr.* 1 (PG 56, 263): Ἐγὼ οὖν οἴκοι καθήμενος, καὶ τῆς φωνῆς ἀκούων ἐκρηγνυμένης, τῶν κλυδωνιζομένων χαλεπώτερον ἔπασχον. Ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι, τῶν κυμάτων τοῖς τοίχοις τῆς νηὸς προσρηγνυμένων, περὶ τῶν ἐσχάτων κινδυνεύοντες δεδοίκασιν· οὕτω καὶ ἐμοὶ χαλεπώτεραι αἱ κραυγαὶ προσερρήγνυντο ἐκεῖναι, καὶ εἰς τὴν γῆν ἔκυπτον καὶ ἐνεκαλυπτόμην.

What Chrysostom is in fact doing is "staging" the drama of his personal misery for the benefit of his spectators-listeners, caused by their hardness of heart. The audience's attention is as a matter of fact redirected from the profane spectacles (or better from their memory of them) to the sacred orator's *performance*. Like a character in a tragedy,[30] he displays his suffering, stylizing it in a few acting gestures of sure effect: his head bowed down, his gaze fixed to the ground, avoiding facing the public out of shame. Those gestures, of course, belong to the character (i.e. himself in the situation of two days before), but the *performer* (i.e. the orator describing the scene just then) somehow calls them up through the *actio*. Immediately afterwards, to intensify in the listeners the feeling they are watching a theatrical scene, the playwright-orator introduces a deuteragonist, represented by a hypothetical "foreigner" (ξένος) who, should he arrive at Constantinople in that instant, would not be able to refrain from expressing his outraged astonishment at finding the city in that state: "So, this is the city of the Apostles, this she who had such a teacher, these the people loving Christ, not the fictitious theatre but the spiritual one?"[31] Chrysostom's rhetorical exploit, as we can see, walks on the tightrope of a paradox. He represents the sacred orator who in a church laments the ineffectiveness of rhetoric with respect to the overpowering force of theatre, but does so trying in his turn to "mime" (by means of rhetoric which, after all, he cannot deem ineffective to such a point!) a sort of spectacle on the interior stage, although with the purpose to effect, through the power of words, that rejection of spectacles which he was not able to obtain from his audience.[32]

30 Or, to be more precise and adhere to the reality of the late antique theatre, like a mime playing in a tragedy. Note that, though Chrysostom's description is very short, it contains all the necessary stage directions for the interpretation of the scene: the place, the actor's posture, the gestures to be made.

31 John Chrysostom, *theatr.* 1 (PG 56, 263): Ταῦτα ἡ πόλις τῶν ἀποστόλων; ταῦτα ἡ τοιοῦτον λαβοῦσα ὑποφήτην; ταῦτα ὁ δῆμος ὁ φιλόχριστος, τὸ θέατρον τὸ ἄπλαστον, τὸ πνευματικόν. Calling Constantinople "the city of the Apostles" relates to the presence of the homonymous Constantinian basilica, while the description of the Christian people as "spiritual theatre" draws in the positive significance of θέατρον (Jacob 2010: 62–71; 77–80) referring back to the theme of the divine spectacle: in other words, what Chrysostom wants to underline is how particularly serious on the part of Christians was the fact of eluding their Christian engagement to take refuge in the passivity of spectacles exactly on a Friday, the day "when our Lord was crucified for the world"—instead of taking part in the liturgical action, the only possible adequate *performative* reply to God's salvific intervention that renders them co-protagonists in the great salvation drama. Instead of *being themselves a spectacle* (in the sense of 1 Cor 4:9) they have *gone to spectacles*.

32 For space reasons we give here but one example, please keep in mind that it is not an

The fact that contagion from the mentality of spectacles crosses the boundaries of space and time devoted to the *ludi* is not only due to what we have already observed, that each spectator leaving the theatre carries those germs inside his mind. Another way of spreading that mentality, and pervading both the individual and the collective existence, consists in what we could call "public discourse on spectacles", i.e. the talk about themselves which they continue to produce and which amplifies their effects out of measure. For this aspect as well, it is worth noting immediately, the relation between images and words is crucial: what is seen where spectacles take place becomes the object of collective narration because everybody is talking about it, in those days like today, and according to Chrysostom this continuous talk about "the world of spectacles", its stars and its events, becomes a sort of background noise in the streets, squares and houses accompanying everyone's life, creeping into everyone's mind, whether they like it or not, even into the minds of those who perhaps did not go to the theatre or the circus. Sure of the seriousness of this danger, he often warns the Christians to refrain from the gossip about spectacles, in addition to avoiding attendance. But he fully realizes that this preventative measure, though wise, is not enough: avoiding contagion from the "public discourse on spectacles" is practically impossible for the inhabitants of the late antique city. He therefore chooses to "get inside it" himself, taking it on, and we dare say almost miming it, in his sacred oratory, for a therapeutic purpose. Thus, e.g., in a homily on John's Gospel, with the intent to exhort the faithful to frequently read, and reflect on, God's word, he describes by contrast the noxious effects of this "spoken spectacle":

> The individuals who are the idler and more careless in their conversation often talk about mimes, dancers and charioteers, thus soiling their ears, corrupting their soul and arousing the natural reactions to these stories. They introduce all sorts of ills into their own minds through that talk. As a matter of fact, as soon as the tongue has pronounced the name of a mime, the soul imagines his face, hair and soft dress, him in his even softer appearance. Another, in his turn, from elsewhere rekindles flames

isolated case; on the contrary, the "theatrical" display of his outraged disappointment is an opening *topos* which our author seems rather to favour. Cf. *Lazar.* 7,1 (PG 48, 1043–1046); *hom. in Gen.* 6,1 (PG 53, 54–55); *hom in Gen.* 41,1 (PG 54, 374–375); *catech. illum.* 6,1–2 (SCh 50, 215–216). Elsewhere the orator's frustration, his being sick and tired of exhorting the faithful in vain to reject spectacles, is to be found in the course of the homily, as in *hom. in Act.* 44,3 (PG 60, 312).

> by mentioning a prostitute: her words, her gestures, the rolling of her eyes, the willowy looks, the curls, the make-up on her cheeks, the eye-shadow.[33]

Also in this case we face the ambivalence of the connection between rhetoric and theatre: on the one hand we have, in fact, on the part of the common people a kind of "verbalization" of spectacles, which amplifies their power. Thanks to that, the force of *ludi*, which—as above mentioned—is not so much produced by verbal contents as by multisensory impressions (but in first place visual ones), generated inside a time-spatial context where everything cooperates in making them even more intense and irresistible, grows stronger and somehow gets possession also of the sphere of the word. On the other hand the word is, that notwithstanding, used by Chrysostom to counteract the influence of spectacles, operating in its turn a kind of "rhetorization of the theatre", under an opposing banner but with equal emotional intensity. If the images of spectacles, transmitted by means of words, are able to produce a negative effect, the preacher's words, becoming mental images (i.e., in a way, a spectacle) try to serve as an antidote by exposing the pernicious effects of the contamination from spectacles.

There is so much at stake that even the ecclesial life is directly involved.[34] It is possible to live the central moments of Christian life and make its more significant gestures, from participating in sacraments to the practice of catechesis and alms-giving, in a theatrical manner, spurred not by authentic devotion, but on the contrary by that spirit of "vainglory" (κενοδοξία) which according to Chrysostom is a capital sin of the society of his days and the constant object of his moral preaching.[35] But how is it possible for the church to become a "theatre"? We have seen that even it can on occasions be called θέατρον by Chrysostom, but in a strictly spiritual sense: a spectacle "to the world, both to

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33 John Chrysostom, *hom. in Jo.* 18, 4 (PG 59, 119–120): οἱ δὲ ῥᾳθυμότεροι καὶ μᾶλλον ἠμελημένοι, μίμους καὶ ὀρχηστὰς καὶ ἡνιόχους ἐν τοῖς αὐτῶν περιφέρουσι λόγοις, τὴν ἀκοὴν μολύνοντες, τὴν ψυχὴν διαφθείροντες, τὴν φύσιν ἐκβακχεύοντες τούτοις τοῖς διηγήμασιν, ἅπαν κακίας εἶδος εἰς τὴν ἑαυτῶν διάνοιαν διὰ ταύτης εἰσάγοντες τῆς διαλέξεως. Ἅμα γὰρ ἐφθέγξατο ἡ γλῶττα τοῦ ὀρχουμένου τὸ ὄνομα, καὶ εὐθέως ἀνετύπωσεν ἡ ψυχὴ τὴν ὄψιν, τὴν κόμην, τὴν ἐσθῆτα τὴν ἁπαλὴν, αὐτὸν ἐκεῖνον τούτων μαλακώτερον ὄντα. Ἕτερος πάλιν ἑτέρωθεν ἀνερρίπισε τὴν φλόγα, γυναῖκα πόρνην εἰς τὴν διάλεξιν εἰσαγαγὼν, κἀκείνης τὰ ῥήματα, τὰ σχήματα, τῶν ὀμμάτων τὰς διαστροφὰς, τῆς ὄψεως τὸ ὑγρὸν, τῶν τριχῶν τὰς στρεβλώσεις, τῶν παρειῶν τὰ ἐπιτρίμματα, τὰς ὑπογραφάς.

34 See Lugaresi (2008: 783–786).

35 See Lugaresi (2008: 742–751).

angels and men", in Paul's words (1 Cor 4,9), or a spectacle in front of God, but in no case an "assembly of spectators". Even though in that time the Christian liturgy, under the influence of the sumptuous imperial etiquette, is acquiring, especially in a seat like Constantinople, a more and more remarkable visual magnificence, Chrysostom does not tire of repeating that "the church is not a theatre where people listen for their pleasure",[36] instead it is a "school" where we listen to God's word in order to meditate on it, absorb it and put it seriously into practice.[37] This is a recurrent theme in his preaching,[38] and the reason is easily understood: the church, space of the unique, one-off event of Christ's redeeming sacrifice[39] and space where we listen to the divine word (not to look at it, but only to picture it on the interior stage by means of our imagination) and to put it into practice, can in no way be used for the purpose of entertaining. That notwithstanding, even the church can be contaminated by the mentality of spectacles and the liturgical chronotope can mutate into a "gazing machine" very similar to profane theatres.

> Many enter [the church] to feast their eyes on women's beauty, others to watch with curiosity the gracefulness of children. (…) What are you doing, man? You curiously gaze at women's beauty and are not appalled at offending God's temple? Do you think the church is a brothel and more dishonourable than the market-place? In the square you are afraid and ashamed to be seen curiously watching a woman; on the contrary in God's temple, while God in person is speaking to you and threatening because of that behaviour, you fornicate and are an adulterer at the very moment in which you hear what you ought not to do, and are not horrified, not amazed? These are the things you are taught by the theatres of depravity, a plague difficult to eliminate, lethal poison, fatal trap for those who fall into it, ruin striking down the dissolute enticed by pleasure.[40]

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36 Thus in an Antiochian homily, *pop. Antioch. stat.* 2, 4 (PG 49, 38): οὐκ ἔστι θέατρον ἡ ἐκκλησία, ἵνα πρὸς τέρψιν ἀκούωμεν. But it is a common theme.

37 On the image of the church as school in Chrysostom, further references in Christo (2006: 346–349). The theme is central in Rylaarsdam (2014).

38 See Lugaresi (2008: 780–783).

39 Event which, mind you, is not theatrically "represented" by the liturgy, according to the serial form typical of spectacles, but instead re-presented in its uniqueness of historical fact. Here lies, in the Fathers' view, the fundamental dividing line between rite and spectacle, which can be well summed up in Augustine's apt words (*Io. ev. tract.* 11,12): *quidquid iterum fit, lusus est.*

40 *Hom. in Mt.* 73, 3 (PG 58, 676–677): Πολλοὶ εἰσίασι κάλλη γυναικῶν περιβλέποντες· ἄλλοι παί-

The scene Chrysostom describes is lively and realistic: as in a mirror (perhaps we should say in a Candid Camera clip), his audience (or at least a part) is made to look in the face all their own “ugliness” and embarrassing lack of dignity, but also to reflect on the reasons for this degradation. The fact that many people go to church as if they went to the theatre is not exceedingly surprising, as, after all, from a structural point of view the church itself is a θέατρον, i.e. a closed space, well defined and separated from the surrounding space, where a promiscuous public gathers and stays for a reasonably long time in order to watch a *performance*. Though based on completely different architectural models, church and theatre have something in common in their topography: in both, in fact, the space is organised in such a way as to favour concentration and to make the eyes of onlookers all focus on one point, i.e. where the *performance* is taking place. However, such configuration allows in both cases for deviations from the foreseen convention: church and theatre are, all taken into account, in the late antique city among the few public places where an individual could assume and keep for a long time the position of a free onlooker (i.e. spectator) without his behaviour being questioned and judged by other people’s glances. Now, if in the theatre everybody’s *libido spectandi* could be fully satisfied with impunity, enjoying in addition to the scene intended for that purpose also the spectacle possibly offered by the spectators themselves,[41] in a game which is in a way complementary to the primary function of the place because it doubles its ludic attraction, in a church such a behaviour would completely disrupt the logic and sense of the entire chronotope. Those who enter the church in order to look at women and children bring into the sacred building the theatrical perspective since, instead of looking at (and in first place listening to) the priest, they take advantage of the privileged position allotted by the situation[42] in order to commit that sin of μοιχεία which Jesus so severely condemns in Mt 5,28. Thus,

δων ὥρας περιεργαζόμενοι. [...] Τί ποιεῖς, ἄνθρωπε; κάλλη γυναικῶν περιεργάζῃ, καὶ οὐ φρίττεις οὕτως ἐνυβρίζων εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ; Πορνεῖον εἶναι σοι δοκεῖ ἡ ἐκκλησία, καὶ τῆς ἀγορᾶς ἀτιμοτέρα; Ἐν ἀγορᾷ μὲν γὰρ δέδοικας καὶ αἰσχύνῃ φανῆναι γυναῖκα περιεργαζόμενος· ἐν δὲ τῷ ναῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ, αὐτοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ διαλεγομένου σοι καὶ ἀπειλοῦντος ὑπὲρ τούτων, πορνεύεις καὶ μοιχεύεις κατ᾽αὐτὸν τὸν καιρὸν, καθ᾽ὃν ἀκούεις μὴ ταῦτα ποιεῖν· καὶ οὐ φρίττεις, οὐδὲ ἐξέστηκας; Ταῦτα ὑμᾶς τὰ θέατρα τῆς ἀσελγείας διδάσκει, ὁ λοιμὸς ὁ δυσκατάλυτος, τὰ δηλητήρια φάρμακα, αἱ χαλεπαὶ τῶν ἀναπεπτωκότων πάγαι, ἡ μεθ᾽ἡδονῆς τῶν ἀκολάστων ἀπώλεια.

41 Think of the spectator imagined by Ovid, *Ars amatoria*, 1, 135–170 or *Amores*, 3, 2, for whom the theatre, amphitheatre and circus are above all the frame in which to enjoy his own private spectacle consisting of the body of the beloved woman.

42 On this point, note the comparison the author makes between the situation in the church and the *agorà*: the insistent and curious attention (περιεργάζομαι) typical of the way of watching spectacles is not socially acceptable in the market-place and is immediately

the worst of perversions is perpetrated, since theatrical contamination turns the church from being a school of responsibility for the eyes into a theatre in which to indulge one's lust through the eyes. But we see that, even in this case, the rhetorical operation conducted by Chrysostom continues along the same lines and consists in overturning the very dynamic he denounces. The sequence of ideas triggered is as follows: the church is no theatre, it is a school against the theatre; but those who are victims of the plague, the venom and the trap of the "theatres of depravity" turn it into a theatre because instead of looking at and listening to the priest, they indulge their *curiositas* toward female and ephebic bodies, positioning themselves as "immune spectators" protected from being seen in their turn; but John unmasks them by looking at them, having the eyes of the whole liturgical assembly focus on them and creating, by means of his rhetoric, in front of everybody a scene in which the roles are reversed, because these "unauthorised" spectators, against their will, become the object of the general attention and blame.

There is something else to note: another characteristic of Chrysostom's position is that, in his speeches, he often introduces a third emblematic place, the *home*, into his bipolar scheme based on the customary opposition of church and theatre. Ideally situated in a central position between the two opposed poles, the home is influenced by both of them. In the excerpts above examined we have already seen something about the pernicious effects that attending spectacles has on heads of family;[43] but there are many more ways in which

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sanctioned because he who behaves like that is in his turn subjected to the bother of being looked at: in that sense he "is ashamed of being seen" (αἰσχύνῃ φανῆναι). In the church, paradoxically he would be more free to behave like that, were it not for the preacher's intervention. The paradox is much more meaningful if we keep in mind Chrysostom's strategy of delegitimizing the *agorà*, since it is the place reflecting the pagan civic culture, as shown in Spuntarelli's fine analysis (2012).

43 And we could add some more, in particular *David.* 3, 2 (PG 54, 697) where, addressing the family head who is coming back home from the theatre "gone softer (χαυνότερος), more dissolute (ἀσελγέστερος), and an enemy of all forms of temperance (σωφροσύνης ἁπάσης ἐχθρὸς)", Chrysostom reproaches him because he is filled with loath for his spouse, "a sensible and honest woman, his life companion", and also loath for family life more in general: "you do not look with pleasure on anything connected with the home (οὐδὲν μεθ᾽ἡδονῆς ὁρᾷς τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκίας)". This irritability, mind you, inevitably spreads from the home to the church: "You will look with less pleasure also on the church itself, and will feel annoyance while listening to speeches dealing with temperance and dignity. In fact they no longer are a teaching (διδασκαλία) for you, but on the contrary an accusation (κατηγορία) and, affected little by little to the point of despair, in the end you will drop a teaching that is beneficial for everybody".

the contagion of spectacles can penetrate into the home, e.g. on the occasion of banquets or wedding celebrations.[44] On the other hand, Chrysostom sees the family circle as a privileged environment, where the pastoral action of the church is carried out in the most effective way, going back to the theological and moral contents of the sermons and reading the Holy Scriptures in the family.[45] The fight against the pernicious effects of spectacles is therefore fought also (when not above all) within the family, and that is a very important point from our author's perspective, since the connection with the *home* as a place of ordinary life expresses a *principle of reality*: home means reassertion of the rights and the burden of "real life", in contrast to the fictitious and alienating life of the theatrical performance; but, if we like, the concrete reference to everyday life is also a means of avoiding the risk that the other performance, that of the antitheatrical rhetoric of the sacred orator, sound too abstract, though "true" in its contents. That is the reason why, while he lays stress on the contrast of home and theatre, Chrysostom on the contrary keeps underlining the strong continuity that there should be between *church* and *home*, almost as if they were respectively one the foundation and the other its extension.

3 Spectacle by Means of Rhetoric: Spoken Theatre in the Homiletic Context

We have already seen how, according to Chrysostom, the church should launch an all-out counteroffensive against the invasion by spectacles pervading the whole city life and threatening to contaminate also the ecclesial space. This kind of *Kulturkampf* must be founded on the stark contrast of two concepts and mixing them up would be extremely dangerous: on the one hand the "theatricality" typical of performances in the theatre and in general of all *ludi* events, and on the other what we could call, as opposed to it, the "spiritual visibility" offered by the Gospel. It is not by chance that he accurately draws that distinction at the very opening to his first homily in the great course on John's Gospel, as if he felt the necessity to set things straight from the very beginning,

44 See Lugaresi (2008: 793–798). On Chrysostom's special care for the family as the hub of the endeavour to Christianize the city, see Brown (1988: 305–322).

45 On the practice of family readings from the Bible as continuation of the work produced by the preacher in the church, see Lugaresi (2008: 788–791) and, recently, de Wet (2014: 129–131).

so as to provide a correct approach to the text of the Gospel.[46] The first words of the speech evoke the audience of profane spectacles (Οἱ τῶν ἀγώνων τῶν ἔξωθεν θεαταὶ), reminding the listeners of the fact that, when the fight enthusiasts learn there will be a very strong and famous athlete, they turn up in droves to watch him perform and follow his *performance* with the utmost concentration so that they do not miss any detail of the spectacle, and the same happens when there is a μουσικὸς θαυμαστὸς: they all let go of their business and fill the theatre "to listen with great attention to the songs and sounds". Even the better educated (οἱ δὲ ῥητορικῶν ἔμπειροι λὸγων) behave in the same way toward the sophists reciting their speeches in the theatre.[47]

The following passage seems predictable: if the spectators behave like that with respect to the profane spectacles, how much greater the congregation's attention ought to be, now that he who addresses them is not a musician or a sophist, but an apostle! As a matter of fact, to start with, the comparison is used by Chrysostom as an *a fortiori* argument, because the evangelist is presented like an orator who is superior to all others, and whose booming voice has filled the world not because he speaks loudly, but because his tongue is driven by the divine grace. Between the performance about to take place in the church and those that attract such large audiences to the theatres there is apparently only a qualitative difference, as if the preacher would say to his listeners: look, we offer here a better spectacle. But immediately afterwards he changes tack in his reasoning by saying that

> The son of thunder, Christ's dearest, the column of all the churches in the world, he who keeps the keys to heaven and drinks out of Christ's chalice, who was christened with his baptism and rested in complete trust on his breast, he now comes to us not in order to recite a drama, nor does he cover his head with a mask, go to the proscenium, stamp his feet on the floor of the orchestra, wear a golden robe […] He now appears to us without stage pretence; in fact in him there is no simulation,

46 John Chrysostom, *hom. in Jo.* 1, 1 (PG 59, 23–25). Here we do not get to the heart of the complex matter of the real relations among Chrysostom's homilies gathered by the handwritten tradition into sets, a matter on which, as well-known, in recent decades much research work has been done, especially by P. Allen and W. Mayer. The comments here proposed remain valid even if John's homilies should not be considered a set by the author organically devised and treated.

47 Note that Chrysostom points out how *that* rhetoric fully belongs to the theatrical dimension (*hom. in Jo.* 1, 1 PG 59, 25): Ἔστι γὰρ καὶ τούτοις θέατρα, καὶ ἀκροαταὶ, καὶ κρότοι, καὶ ψόφος, καὶ βάσανος τῶν λεγομένων ἐσχάτη.

> no make-believe, on the contrary he, bare-headed, proclaims the naked truth; nor being different [from how he looks] does he deceive those who are listening about his identity by using his appearance, eyes and voice. He needs no instruments for his announcement, neither a cithara, nor a lyre or any other thing, he just performs everything by means of his tongue, by speaking with a softer and more effective voice than any citharist, any music. His proscenium is the whole heaven; the theatre is the world; spectators and listeners are all angels and those among men who are angels or seek to become such.[48]

The contrast between evangelical truth and stage pretence could not be more pronounced. The preacher of the Christian message does announce an extraordinary representation, but the nature of that phenomenon is intrinsically anti-theatrical: the relentless series of negatives through which Chrysostom evokes, by contrast, some characteristic features of theatrical spectacles has precisely the purpose to point it out. Also proclaiming the Gospel has its own visibility, here personified in the figure of the evangelist advancing (like an actor!) on the stage of the world to make his announcement, but in it, unlike in spectacles, there is no contradiction between appearances and truth: οὗτος ἡμῖν φαίνεται νῦν, οὐχ ὑπόκρισιν ἔχων. And the imagination it feeds does not need any devices or instruments to excite the senses, instead "it achieves everything through the tongue" (πάντα τῇ γλώττῃ ἐργάζεται).

On the basis of this inspiration and, we could say, mandate, Chrysostom indefatigably "dramatizes" in his preaching the great spectacles of the sacred history, especially of Christ's life: his baptism "was a great spectacle".[49] The

48 John Chrysostom, *hom. in Jo.* 1, 1 (PG 59, 25–26): Ὁ γὰρ τῆς βροντῆς υἱός, ὁ ἀγαπητὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ στῦλος τῶν κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐκκλησιῶν, ὁ τὰς κλεῖς ἔχων τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ὁ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ πιών, καὶ τὸ βάπτισμα βαπτισθείς, ὁ κατακλιθεὶς ἐπὶ τὸ στῆθος τὸ δεσποτικὸν μετὰ παρρησίας πολλῆς, οὗτος ἡμῖν εἰσέρχεται νῦν· οὐ δρᾶμα ὑποκρινόμενος, οὐδὲ προσωπείῳ κρύπτων τὴν κεφαλήν, οὐδὲ ἐπ᾽ὀκρίβαντος ἀναβαίνων, οὐδὲ ὀρχήστραν τῷ ποδὶ κατακρούων, οὐδὲ ἐσθῆτι κεκοσμημένος χρυσῇ· ἀλλ᾽εἰσέρχεται στολὴν ἔχων ἀμήχανον ἔχουσαν κάλλος. [...] Οὗτος ἡμῖν φανεῖται νῦν, οὐχ ὑπόκρισιν ἔχων· οὐδὲ γὰρ ὑπόκρισις παρ᾽αὐτῷ, οὐδὲ πλάσμα καὶ μῦθος· ἀλλὰ γυμνῇ τῇ κεφαλῇ γυμνὴν ἀπαγγέλλει τὴν ἀλήθειαν· οὐχ ἕτερος μὲν ὤν, ἕτερα δὲ περὶ αὐτοῦ τοὺς ἀκούοντας πείθων τῷ σχήματι, τῷ βλέμματι, τῇ φωνῇ· οὐκ ὀργάνων πρὸς τὴν ἀπαγγελίαν δεόμενος, οἷον κιθάρας ἢ λύρας, ἤ τινος τῶν τοιούτων ἑτέρου· ἀλλὰ πάντα τῇ γλώττῇ ἐργάζεται, παντὸς μὲν κιθαριστοῦ, πάσης δὲ μουσικῆς ἡδίω καὶ χρησιμωτέραν φωνὴν ἀφιείς. Ἔστι δὲ αὐτῷ προσκήνιον μέν, ὁ οὐρανὸς ἅπας· θέατρον δέ, ἡ οἰκουμένη· θεαταὶ δὲ καὶ ἀκροαταί, πάντες ἄγγελοι, καὶ ἀνθρώπων ὅσοιπερ ἄγγελοι τυγχάνουσιν ὄντες, ἢ καὶ γενέσθαι ἐπιθυμοῦσιν.

49 John Chrysostom, *hom. in Mt.* 10, 2 (PG 57, 186).

story of the woman from Canaan in Mt 15, 21–22 is called θέατρον, as well as the healing of the paralytic at Bethesda Pool;[50] we could continue multiplying the examples, but the most visible and "dramatic" event (which is at the same time the most antitheatrical in its essence) is the crucifixion.

> God performed his resurrection secretly and in a secluded place, charging the whole course of the following history [with the task] of its proof, but he submitted to the cross in the centre of the city, in the middle of a festivity, in the midst of the Jews, at the presence of both tribunals, the Roman and the Jewish, when the festival was rallying everybody, in broad daylight, on the universal stage of the world.[51]

What Chrysostom wants to underline with this clever remark is the fact that God overturned the worldly logic of *kenodoxia*, which aims at the ostentation of power and the concealment of weakness, and, in a manner of speaking, consigned to the dimension of theatricality (and what is more to an obscene and repulsive theatricality) Christ's apparent defeat on the cross, but that the essentially antitheatrical nature of that event is revealed precisely by the "carnal" invisibility of the resurrection, removed from a theatrical sort of display and entrusted only to the spiritual vision of the faith and to the ἀπόδειξις of the testimony by the faithful.

It is his duty, as God's minister, to help the faithful to spiritually "see" those events through his preaching.[52] But with the aid of rhetoric it is possible to represent to the congregation the whole of Christian life as a great interior spectacle. Actually, this "conversation about Christian stories", according to him, should take the place, in the space of social relations, of the "talk about spectacles" that we mentioned above.[53] Speaking of a renowned episode in the Old

50 See respectively *hom. in Mt.* 52, 1 (PG 58, 519) and *De Christi divinitate*, 1 (SCh 396, 324).

51 *Ad eos qui scandalizati sunt*, 17, 9 (SCh 79, 228): Καὶ τὴν μὲν ἀνάστασιν λάθρᾳ καὶ ἐν παραβύστῳ πεποίηκεν, ἐπιτρέπων αὐτῆς τὴν ἀπόδειξιν τῷ μετὰ ταῦτα χρόνῳ παντί· τὸν δὲ σταυρὸν ἐν μέσῃ τῇ πόλει, ἐν μέσῃ τῇ ἑορτῇ, ἐν μέσῳ τῷ δήμῳ τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ἑκατέρων τῶν δικαστηρίων παρόντων, Ῥωμαικῶν τε καὶ Ἰουδαικῶν, τῆς ἑορτῆς πάντας συναγούσης, ἐν ἡμέρᾳ μέσῃ, ἐν κοινῷ τῆς οἰκουμένης θεάτρῳ ὑπέμεινε.

52 See e.g. the "close-up pictures" of Christ's Passion, caught also in its farcical aspect, in the vivid description by *Ep. Olymp.* 7, 4 (SCh 13 bis, 148).

53 The contrast between "theatrical" spectacle and word is present also in banquets. Those who take on mimes and dancers turn their house into a theatre; Christians must instead read God's word during meals, because it is like having God in person at one's table: see Lugaresi (2008: 795).

Testament (where David spares King Saul's life, in 1Sam 26), he recommends the congregation to frequently take it up again in everyday conversations:

> Let us not only picture those scenes in our soul, but, when we happen to meet, let us speak to each other about them over and over again and let us frequently repeat these stories when we speak to our wife and children. As a matter of fact, if you wish to speak about a king, here is a king for you; if you want soldiers, the home, political affairs, you will see in the Holy Scripture plenty of those things. These stories prove immensely useful: it is impossible, in fact, [absolutely] impossible for the soul, while captivated by these stories, to be a slave to passion. So, in order not to waste our time to no avail and not to squander our life uselessly in vain and unseemly trivialities, let us learn the stories of those noble personalities and constantly speak about them and their feats. And if somebody among those present should wish to speak about theatres, hippodromes, events that have nothing to do with you, avert him from that topic and lead him to this narration, so that, cleansed in the soul and delighted in an entirely safe pleasure, made meek and benevolent toward all those who inflicted suffering on us, we may in the afterlife, bearing no grudges, enjoy never-ending bliss.[54]

Here is practical advice on how to resist the influence of spectacles: instead of attending them and assuming a mere passive role as spectators, read and speak about what you wish to see and create by yourselves your own interior theatre.[55]

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54 John Chrysostom, *David.* 1, 7 (PG 54, 686): Ταῦτα μὴ μόνον ἐπὶ τῆς διανοίας γράφωμεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν συνεδρίοις διαλεγώμεθα πρὸς ἀλλήλους διηνεκῶς· ταῦτα καὶ πρὸς γυναῖκα, καὶ πρὸς παιδία συνεχῶς ἀνακινῶμεν τὰ διηγήματα. Εἴτε γὰρ περὶ βασιλέως διαλέγεσθαι, ἰδοὺ βασιλεύς· εἴτε περὶ στρατιωτῶν, εἴτε περὶ οἰκίας, εἴτε περὶ πολιτικῶν πραγμάτων, πολλὴν ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς ὄψει τούτων τὴν εὐπορίαν. Ταῦτα μεγίστην ἔχει τὰ διηγήματα τὴν ὠφέλειαν. Ἀμήχανον γὰρ, ἀμήχανον, ψυχὴν ἐν ταύταις στρεφομένην ταῖς ἱστορίαις, δυνηθῆναί ποτε κρατηθῆναι τῷ πάθει. Ἵν' οὖν μὴ μάτην τὸν καιρὸν δαπανῶμεν, μηδὲ εἰκῇ τὴν ζωὴν ἡμῶν ἀναλίσκωμεν εἰς φλυαρίας ἀκαίρους καὶ περιττὰς, μάθοντες τῶν γενναίων ἀνδρῶν τὰς ἱστορὶας, ταῦτα συνεχῶς διαλεγώμεθα, καὶ περὶ τούτων. Κἂν βουληθῇ τις τῶν συνεδρευόντων ἢ περὶ θεάτρων, ἢ περὶ ἱπποδρομίας, ἢ περὶ πραγμάτων οὐδέν σοι προσηκόντων ποιήσασθαι λόγον, ἀπαγαγὼν αὐτὸν τῆς ὑποθέσεως ἐκείνης, εἰς ταύτην ἔμβαλε τὴν διήγησιν, ἵνα καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐκκαθάραντες, καὶ ἡδονῆς μετὰ ἀσφαλείας ἀπολαύσαντες, καὶ πράους ἑαυτοὺς καταστήσαντες καὶ ἡμέρους τοῖς λελυπηκόσιν ἅπασιν, ἀπέλθωμεν ἐκεῖ μηδένα ἔχοντες ἐχθρὸν, καὶ τῶν αἰωνίων ἀγαθῶν τύχωμεν [...].

55 A recommendation after all fairly similar to that given to the adolescent Julian, in a different context, by his tutor and which he, as emperor, proudly vindicates in the name

The themes that this sort of Christian "verbal dramaturgy" could address are plenty and you can really choose what you like: maybe St. Paul's life,[56] or the spectacle of monastic life;[57] while for those keen on agonism there are fights between the devil and Christian souls or the struggle of the Church against the spirit of *kenodoxia*;[58] and so on. Following this method, using but the evocative force of words and in a controlled, "safe" way, it is possible to completely satisfy the *libido spectandi* of a public used to the powerful images of the theatres, even by verging on eroticism in a context strictly marked by asceticism, as in this passage from a homily on the *Epistle to the Ephesians*, in which, aiming at showing that nobody can shirk a monastic vocation using as an excuse his poor constitution, not strong enough to stand that hard life, Chrysostom evokes the image of virgin martyrs and zooms in on the soft, fine bodies of young women

> not yet twenty years old, who had spent all their life in the semi-darkness of bridal chambers, covered in ointments and perfumes, lying on soft beds, themselves naturally soft and made even softer by diligent [beauty] treatments; who all day long had nothing else to do but smarten themselves up, wear jewels and enjoy great luxury, and never did anything by themselves because they had many maids looking after them, soft dresses, softer than their bodies, and thin, delicate belts, and were wont to spend all their time amid roses and other perfumes.[59]

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of the superiority of the literary word over the theatrical image (Jul., *Mis*. 351c–352a): "Do not let yourself be persuaded to thrill at that sort of spectacles by the great number of your peers who fill the theatres. Are you interested in horse races? There is one in Homer described to perfection; get the book and read it to the end". However in Julian what is opposed to the theatre is the written word (therefore a path only for a few intellectuals); on the contrary, in Chrysostom we deal with a spoken word, or rather "recited" in the oratory performance and offered to all and sundry.

56 The details of which are all vividly portrayed: to quote but one passage, see *hom. in Col.* 10,4 (PG 62, 371) where Paul in chains is promoted as a spectacle more beautiful than women adorned with jewels. The constant practice of "Pauline portraiture" exerted in his works by Chrysostom is exhaustively studied by Mitchell (2000): in particular, on "Paul in chains" (2000: 176–185).

57 Here as well there could be plenty of references, suffice it to quote *hom. in Mt.* 68,3–4 (PG 58, 643–646) and 69,3 (PG 58, 652–653).

58 Again, as an example: cf. *hom. in Jo.* 32, 3 (PG 59, 188) and *inan. glor.* 1 (SCh 188, 66).

59 *Hom. in Eph.* 13, 3 (PG 62, 98): κόραι εἰκοστὸν ἔτος οὔπω γενόμεναι, ἐν θαλάμοις καὶ ἐν σκιατροφίᾳ τὸν ἅπαντα διατελέσασαι χρόνον [ἐν] θαλάμοις μύρων γέμουσαι καὶ θυμιαμάτων, ἐπὶ στρωμνῆς ἁπαλῆς κατακείμεναι, ἁπαλαὶ καὶ αὐταὶ τὴν φύσιν, καὶ τῇ πολλῇ θεραπείᾳ μαλακώτεραι γινόμεναι, διὰ τῆς ἡμέρας πάσης οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἔργον ἔχουσαι, ἢ τὸ καλλωπίζεσθαι καὶ

Elsewhere the eroticism is implicit or, better said, it is recalled by the description of a scene which is supposed to deny it. This happens, for instance, in a passage from a homily on the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, in which Chrysostom is urging Christian matrons not to dress up wearing jewels and ostentatious clothes like spectacle women, who do all they can "to catch [everybody's] eyes" (πρὸς τὸ θεαθῆναι). The Christian woman must adorn herself for a different theatre, the celestial one: it is there that she must be a success. Then he adds:

> Tell me: if the woman who prostitutes herself on the stage, giving up jewels, beautiful clothes and laughs, facetious and obscene words, should wear a plain dress without make up and should appear on the stage speaking words full of fear of God, reasoning about temperance, and saying nothing obscene, would not everybody stand up and protest? Would they not send her packing because she is not able to meet the audience's taste and because she spoke words incompatible with that satanic theatre? Likewise also you, should you show up in the celestial theatre wearing her clothes, will be chased away by the spectators.[60]

This is not only an effective example: in an extremely compact form, but precisely because of that very incisive, this is the subject of an "impossible mime", impossible to perform in the theatre but which everybody can see by projecting it on the screen of his interior stage: the *porne* who converts on the stage, astounding everybody and going to her martyrdom.[61]

There are indeed plenty of passages in which the rhetorical *ekphrasis* becomes almost a script and they are not only concerned with aspects of Christian life like in the previous examples, they take into consideration also situa-

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χρυσοφορεῖν καὶ τρυφῆς ἀπολαύειν πολλῆς, οὐδὲ ἑαυταῖς διακονούμεναι, ἀλλὰ πολλὰς ἔχουσαι τὰς θεραπαινίδας τὰς παρεστηκυίας, ἱμάτια ἔχουσαι μαλακὰ τοῦ σώματος μαλακώτερα, λεπτὰς ὀθόνας καὶ τρυφερὰς, ἐν ῥόδοις καὶ ταῖς τοιαύτας εὐωδίαις διηνεκῶς ἀσχολούμεναι [...].

60 *Hom. in Hebr.* 28,5 (PG 63, 199): Εἰπὲ γάρ μοι, ἐὰν ἡ πόρνη γυνὴ ἀφεῖσα τὰ χρυσία καὶ τὰ ἱμάτια καὶ τὸν γέλωτα καὶ τὰ ῥήματα τὰ ἀστεῖα καὶ τὰ αἰσχρὰ, εὐτελὲς ἱμάτιον περιβάληται, καὶ ἀνεπιτηδεύτως συνθεῖσα ἑαυτὴν εἰσέλθῃ, καὶ θεοσεβῆ φθέγγηται ῥήματα, καὶ περὶ σωφροσύνης διαλέγηται, καὶ μηδὲν αἰσχρὸν λέγῃ, οὐχὶ ἀναστήσονται πάντες; οὐχὶ διαλυθήσεται τοῦτο τὸ θέατρον; οὐχὶ ἐκβαλοῦσιν αὐτὴν, ὡς οὐκ εἰδυῖαν ἁρμόσασθαι τῷ δήμῳ, καὶ ἀλλότρια λέγουσαν τοῦ θεάτρου ἐκείνου τοῦ σατανικοῦ; Οὕτω καὶ σὺ, ἐὰν τὰ ἐκείνης περιθεμένη εἰς τὸ τῶν οὐρανῶν θέατρον εἰσέλθῃς, ἐκβαλοῦσί τε οἱ θεαταί.

61 According to the model of the hagiographic tradition of the saint mimes: see above, footnote 21.

tions of social life and moral themes.[62] Once the overall sense of Chrysostom's operation is clear, it is not necessary to dwell on it and deal with it in detail; it is worthwhile instead to conclude our treatment by examining some excerpts where the rhetorical counteroffensive against spectacles seems to take a further step, to the very brink of hazard. There are times when the sacred orator does not refrain from going on forays into the forbidden territory of "Satan's theatre", evoking in a theatrical way typical figures and situations and running the risk to arouse in the public reactions close to those produced by the spectacles. The purpose is by now clear: to make spectacles an object of the word, i.e. to rhetorize them, in a manner of speaking, and to conduct this operation under conditions of relative safety, i.e. no longer in a chronotope of theatricality, on the contrary in an antithetical one, which is the church. From Chrysostom's point of view that is the way to weaken and break down the system he is fighting against. We must underline the semiological competence he displays: he is aware that the significance of a message is closely related to the medium through which it is transmitted and to the communicative situation within which it takes place. In particular, the sensual appeal of the images and sounds of spectacles, once reproduced by means of the word, is so to speak filtered and diminished, since the word, though able to excite the imagination, by nature always puts a "logical" distance (and therefore, at least potentially, critical) between the images and the subject profiting from them. In that hiatus the possibility of an analysis, a reflection, a repentance induced by the sermon can find its way, a little as if Chrysostom's daring experiment worked as a vaccine. The passage from homily 18 on the *Gospel of John* by us quoted above, which, as you will recall contained a sketchy but very enticing description of an actress, continues as follows:

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62 Consider, to give but a few examples, the dramatic performance staged in the oration *In Eutropium*, in which the powerful person fallen into disgrace, bodily present at Chrysostom's oratory *performance*, becomes almost a kind of silent deuteragonist. Or the scene in the brothel in *Theod. laps.* 1, 14 (SCh 117, 160) evoked to suggest the comparison with Christ's descent among the sinners: amid vulgar women, who can only suit the taste of slaves and gladiators, there is a beautiful one, of honourable birth and demure, who ended up there because of adverse circumstances; one day a distinguished, high-ranking man turns up, is not ashamed of her and marries her. Or the theatrical performance of a row that broke out in the agorà, with an analysis of the spectacular degradation which those involved undergo, in *hom. in Jo.* 4,4 (PG 59, 52); or the evocation of the "theatrical" exhibitions of the beggars in *hom. in 1 Cor.* 21,5–6 (PG 61, 177–178); or the vivid description of the inside of a jail in *hom. in Jo.* 60,4–6 (PG 59, 333–336); or the representation of the contrast between a festive house and a house in mourning in *hom. in Act.* 42, 3–4 (PG 60, 300–301); and we could go on and on.

> Have you not experienced some emotion while I was describing such things? But do not be ashamed, nor blush [because of that]. In fact, it is a natural need that makes you [react like that], and places the spirit in the state in which it is put by the power of the things that are being told. If, when I speak about them, you feel a certain degree of emotion just for listening to them, while standing in the church and being far away from those things, think about what most likely they feel who actually sit in the theatre enjoying great licence, being outside this venerable and redoubtable assembly, who watch and listen to those things in an atmosphere heavy with indecency.[63]

The *porne* that the preacher causes to parade before the faithful's eyes, provocatively but not foolhardily, is indeed able to arouse them, but not to completely captivate them, as on the contrary would the other two, the one in the flesh displaying herself in the theatre, but even more so, the imaginary one that they take home on the interior stage of their mind. The difference, we repeat, is made by the time-space circumstances in which that image is evoked, and most of all by the logical and analytical dimension in which verbalization necessarily takes apart what in the visual impact is one and simultaneous. That is more clearly understood if we read another evocation-description of a spectacle from homily 37 on the *Gospel of Mathew*:

> But what is this clamour? What is this noise, what are these screams, these diabolical demeanours? The one is a young man, hair to his shoulders and naturally effeminate in the way he moves his eyes and body, dresses, in a word in everything, and he strives to look like a frail girl. The other, on the contrary, is an old man with a shaven head, his loins girded, having got

63 *Hom. in Jo.* 18, 4 (PG 59, 120): Ἆρα οὐκ ἐπάθετέ τι καὶ ἐμοῦ ταῦτα διηγουμένου; Ἀλλὰ μὴ αἰσχυνθῆτε, μηδὲ ἐρυθριάσητε· ἡ γὰρ τῆς φύσεως ἀνάγκη τοῦτο ἀπαιτεῖ καὶ οὕτω διατίθησι τὴν ψυχὴν, ὡς ἂν ἡ τῶν ἀπαγγελλομένων δύναμις ἔχῃ. Εἰ δὲ ἐμοῦ φθεγγομένου, εἰ δὲ ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ ἑστῶτες, εἰ δὲ ἐκείνων ἀπέχοντες ἐπάθετέ τι πρὸς τὴν ἀκρόασιν· ἐννόησον πῶς εἰκὸς διακεῖσθαι τοὺς ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ θεάτρῳ καθημένους, τοὺς ἄδειαν πολλὴν ἔχοντας, τοὺς ἐκτὸς τοῦ σεμνοῦ τούτου καὶ φρικτοῦ συνεδρίου, τοὺς μετὰ πολλῆς ἀναισχυντίας καὶ ὁρῶντας ἐκεῖνα καὶ ἀκούοντας. The audacity of these forays into the world of the eroticism of spectacles caused also shocked outcries, which Chrysostom countered by stating that he was obliged to use such strong words to lead to repentance those who are not ashamed of watching and doing certain things. He also has recourse to the example of the biblical prophets who were not afraid to denounce the evil by using expressions as strong as his: see *hom. in 1 Thess.* 5, 3 (PG 62, 427).

> rid of decency before of his hair, ready to have himself slapped, willing to say and do anything. Besides, the women, bareheaded, keep chatting with people without blushing, showing great brazenness and heaping all sorts of impudence and licentiousness on the soul of their listeners. [...] As a matter of fact, right here are filthy words and even filthier ways; and such hair dressing, ways of walking, clothes, voice, softness of limbs, eyes popping out of one's head, pan-pipes, flutes, scenic actions, subjects of representations, in brief all is heavy with the utmost dissolution.[64]

It is as if the orator, while showing his audience the scene of the spectacle, broke the mirror in which it is reflected, so as to dismantle it and reduce it to a hallucinatory chaos of visual and sound clips. In the experience of the spectacle, all the details here jumbled together, consolidate into one picture, whose powerful emotional impact depends precisely on the quantity and variety of the sense stimuli converging on it: in speaking, on the contrary, the linear and deliberately disjointed accumulation of elements on the one hand emphasizes them expressionistically, on the other hand arouses in the listener (who, remember, is at the same time a spectator on his "interior stage") a destabilizing effect, almost of alienation, aiming at triggering in him a kind of *anxiety about spectacles*. We have already seen the same procedure in the passage from the homily quoted above *In sanctum Barlaam*, referring more directly to the images on the interior stage: the spectators go home "having impressed in their soul rotations of eyeballs, writhing of hands, circular movements of feet and the imprints of all the images that are revealed in the contortion of a body made flexible":[65] therefore not real bodies of women or men, bodies endowed with sense, but disjointed limbs, fragments of reified corporeity, exaggerations of anatomical details, in a sort of pornographic nightmare.

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64 *Hom. in Mt.* 37, 6 (PG 57, 426): Τίς δὲ καὶ ὁ πάταγος; τίς δὲ καὶ ὁ θόρυβος, καὶ αἱ σατανικαὶ κραυγαὶ, καὶ τὰ διαβολικὰ σχήματα; Ὁ μὲν γὰρ ὄπισθεν ἔχει κόμην νέος ὢν, καὶ τὴν φύσιν ἐκθηλύνων, καὶ τῷ βλέμματι, καὶ τῷ σχήματι, καὶ τοῖς ἱματίοις, καὶ πᾶσιν ἁπλῶς εἰς εἰκόνα κόρης ἁπαλῆς ἐκβῆναι φιλονεικεῖ. Ἄλλος δέ τις γεγηρακῶς ὑπεναντίως τούτῳ τὰς τρίχας ξυρῷ περιελὼν, καὶ ἐζωσμένος τὰς πλευρὰς, πρὸ τῶν τριχῶν ἐκτέμνων τὴν αἰδῶ, πρὸς τὸ ῥαπίζεσθαι ἕτοιμος ἕστηκε, πάντα καὶ λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν παρεσκευασμένος. Αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες γυμνῇ τῇ κεφαλῇ ἀπερυθριασμέναι πρὸς δῆμον ἑστήκασι διαλεγόμεναι, τοσαύτην μελέτην ἀναισχυντίας ποιούμεναι, καὶ πᾶσαν ἰταμότητα καὶ ἀσέλγειαν εἰς τὰς τῶν ἀκουόντων ἐκχέουσαι ψυχάς. [...] Καὶ γὰρ καὶ ῥήματα αἰσχρὰ αὐτόθι, καὶ σχήματα αἰσχρότερα, καὶ κουρὰ τοιαύτη, καὶ βάδισις, καὶ στολὴ, καὶ φωνὴ, καὶ μελῶν διάκλασις, καὶ ὀφθαλμῶν ἐκστροφαὶ, καὶ σύριγγες, καὶ αὐλοὶ, καὶ δράματα, καὶ ὑποθέσεις, καὶ πάντα ἁπλῶς τῆς ἐσχάτης ἀσελγείας ἀνάμεστα.

65 *Pan. Barl. mart.* 4 (PG 50, 682).

In all that there is something resembling the philosophical technique of the disassembling of impressions, already experimented with by Marcus Aurelius,[66] but the spirit is substantially different: after all the Stoic philosopher only aimed at becoming "an indifferent spectator"; the Christian preacher, instead, aims at transforming his listeners into real enemies of spectacles.[67] From the church, headquarters of this campaign,[68] to the houses, the streets and the squares of the city, it is possible to imagine taking the offensive against spectacles to the threshold of theatres. In his *De inani gloria*, among a great number of recommendations on how to best bring up children, Chrysostom also suggests taking them, not *to* the theatre, but *in front of* the theatre, towards evening, when performances are over, and watch the spectators coming out and laugh at them: at the young because they are all aroused and (as we well know) and their face betrays their stupid passion, and at the old because they are even more foolish than the young.[69]

The result is a sort of pedagogical meta-theatre, thanks to which the preacher's rhetorical undertaking develops into an original type of *performance* (which might have found favour with some exponents of the twentieth century theatrical avant-gardes), whose inadvertent interpreters are the spectators themselves, transformed into mime and farce characters, despite their will, by

66 Marcus Aurelius, XI.2: "You will succeed in despising the pleasant song, the mime and the pancratium if you divide that harmonious voice into each of the sounds [it consists of] and about each of them you ask yourself whether you are weaker than it. [You will see] your mind will be off it. About the mime you will do an analogous subdivision into each movement or posture; and the same about the pancratium. In general, therefore, for what has no connection with virtue or averts you from it, remember to have recourse to this fragmentation and succeed in despising it by means of its subdivision, apply the same method to your whole life". On this technique, directed toward the "discipline of desire", see Hadot (1996: 102–103, 127–128, 155–157).

67 In a different form and with a partially different effect, the technique of the analytical enumeration of the single elements constituting a complex scene is employed by Chrysostom to break down the whole with the purpose to apply to each single piece the moral judgment due to it. Thus, e.g., in *hom. in Act.* 42, 4 (PG 60, 301) he compares the prison (a place of tribulation, therefore of possible moral redemption) with the theatre (a place of pleasure and ruin for the soul) and the moral characterization of the theatre is as follows: "In the theatre, instead, all the contrary: laughs, obscenity, diabolical pomp, laxity, time waste, waste of whole days, artificial arousal of senseless lust, deliberate pursuit of fornication, training ground of prostitution, school of excess, instigation to indecency, reason for laughter, examples of disgraceful behaviour".

68 On the image of the church as an army in Chrysostom, see Christo (2006: 320–331).

69 John Chrysostom, *Inan. glor.* 79 (SCh 188, 184).

the severe and derisive glances of the other “second degree spectators”. A “theatre”, Chrysostom would perhaps state, where the contrast between truth and fiction has disappeared.

CHAPTER 8

Socrates amongst the Holy Men. Socratic Paradigms and Styles in Eunapius' *Lives*

Javier Campos Daroca

1 Socratic Paradigms in Late Antique Biographies

It is generally accepted that the collection of lives assembled by Eunapius of Sardes aims at presenting alluring images of extraordinary human beings who verged on the divine.[1] This brand of highly learned people represented the continuity of Hellenic culture and, as such, could be seen as worthy rivals to the saints portrayed at that time in the flourishing genre of Christian hagiography. The proper attitude towards these pagan holy men who excelled both in learning and religious charisma was not only that of admiration and emulation, but a blend of exalted reverence and close attachment. Consequently, the writing of their lives was described by Eunapius as an act of piety sharing in that highly emotional relationship and, at the same time, promoting it.

According to this way of understanding biographical writing, Eunapius transformed the aims and methods of the genre of collective lives. As Cox Miller has pointed out, Eunapius' collection does not abide by the structural principles that characteristically articulate the collective biographies written in the second and third centuries AD. He did not create in his work a homogeneous backdrop against which the representatives of a certain type of life (be it the philosopher, the sophist, or the politician) could be exhibited in a

1 Eunapius' *Lives of Philosophers and Sophists* (from now on cited as *Lives*) have recently enjoyed extrordinary editorial and exegetical interest. In less than a decade three important publications have made this difficult text quite a lot more understandable and accessible to research: Becker (2013); Civiletti (2007); Goulet (2014). In this essay we will be following Goulet's edition in chapter (Roman numeral) and paragraph citations, but the translation into English will be drawn from Wright (1921). Commentaries and notes in the works cited above will be referred to by author's name and page of the commentary (and volume in the case of Goulet's). I am deeply grateful to prof. Alberto Quiroga Puertas for his invaluable comments and suggestions, as well as to prof. Romero Mariscal for her advice and helpful support in the course of the writing. Nicholas James Stevenson has revised the English version and improved it significantly. Remaining mistakes are all my own.

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way that allows readers to recognize their differences. Eunapius, more in the style of the Christian author of the *Historia monachorum*, presented his public with a model of humanity at its highest expression in the lives of different men of learning bound together by a uniquely inspired and affectionate style of teaching. The methods and the effects of this presentation are mainly pictorial. In the words of Cox Miller: “the individual lives that make up the *Vitae philosophorum* and the *Historia monachorum* can be seen as a series of icons that function as anthropological images, repeatedly picturing understandings of human identity in such a way as to bring out the religious vision of the collection as a whole.”[2] Consequently, the different portraits are of interest, not for revealing philosophical idiosyncrasies, but as representations of an ideal Life more or less achieved.[3]

This interpretation of Eunapius’ *Lives* has deservedly enjoyed all but universal aceptance in recent scholarship. Nonetheless, I wonder if it might go too far in playing down some details peculiar to individual lives in order to achieve a tidy general picture. What should we make of the conspicuous differences between the portraits of Chrysanthius and Maximus? Certainly they can be accordingly arranged so as to give rise to an image of the ideal sage as a paradigm for the philosophical life.[4] In our view, however, in some cases the significance of these differences goes beyond their function as variants of a more or less uniform ideal figure and opens up interesting perspectives on the texture and economy of the *Lives*.

In this study we take the appearances of Socrates in the lives of certain philosophers as a case in point.[5] Cox Miller mentions the references to Socrates

2 Cox Miller (2000: 229).

3 For a recent assesment in the context of ancient biographical writing see the late Hägg (2012: 351 ff.). A more detailed treatement of the issue in Eunapius can be found in Civiletti (2007: 45–53), and Becker (2013: 51–57). A complete survey of late antique lives of philosophers as a genre can be read in Goulet (2001: 3–63). Goulet distinguishes three axes of deformation with regard to a (probably unattainable) ideal biography: historical, literary and ideological. On the ideological axis, Eunapius scores very high as his portraits of the philosophers are deeply ingrained in “la portée mysterique”, which defines the perspective of the genre (2001: 41–52, 61).

4 Certainly Cox Miller is attentive to the differences between both collections concerning the narrative estructure and the forms of religious subjectivity (2000: 244 ff.). Goulet (2001: 22) provides a rationale for explaining variations in the portraits: when some basic quality is wanting its absence can only be justified by the presence of a higher quality.

5 On Socrates in the Imperial Age, see Trapp (2007) and Long (2010). The (unexpected) richness of Socrates’ reception in Late Antiquity has recently been explored in a volume edited by Layne and Tarrant (2014), in which, amongst other topics, both Socrates’ perplexing

in Eunapius' *Lives* only once,[6] and it would seem that it is done in a way that does not allow us to catch a glimpse of the possible differences. Conversely, the recent edition of Eunapius' *Lives* by Richard Goulet gives Socrates his due and the first section of a chapter where Eunapian ideals of the wise men are dealt with is devoted to the 'modèle socratique'.[7] Obviously, Socratic motives *do not* belong to the stylization of the ideal philosopher. Indeed some of them, Iamblichus to begin with (not to mention Porphyry, Maximus or even Priscus) could scarcely be considered Socratic in any sense of the word.[8] The fact remains that Socrates looms large in the *Lives*, and we shall see that his appearances are neither all alike, nor necessarily contribute towards creating a sense of sameness, but indeed are varied and, even more importantly, contrasting.

In this essay we put forward a reading of Eunapius' biographical work that goes against the grain in three respects. Firstly, it looks for the 'Socratic details' in Eunapius' *Lives* and tries to scrutinize their relevance for the portrait they help to draw, though not as a trait of the ideal philosopher, which the *Lives* as a whole would aim at making as visible (and revered) as possible. We find at least two portraits of Socrates, which we would call 'ethical' (II) and 'political' (III) respectively, each embodying a different version of philosophical life in key

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attitude to 'erotic' love (see Roskam: 2014) and the varieties of Socratic voices (Tarrant: 2014), are intelligently dealt with. The literary figure of Alcibiades joins together *eros* and dialectics and as such has also attracted the attention of the scholar, see Johnson and Tarrant (2003). For an interesting Epicurean interpretation of Socratic love affairs, see Campos-Daroca (2016).

6 Cox Miller (2000: 246 n. 113): "He emphasizes the heights of wisdom to which they have ascended, tellingly comparing three of these figures with Socrates". In her path-breaking volume, Cox Miller paid considerable attention to Socrates (1983: 33, 87–88, 114–130). See the commentaries of Dillon (2006).

7 Goulet (2014: 381–385).

8 According to Giangrande (see Goulet 2014: 381–382), a passage in the life of Iamblichus should be read as an imitation of an anecdote about Socrates in Plutarch, *De genio Socratis*, 580d–f. Porphyry's antisocratism, following in the steps of Aristoxenus of Tarentum, is well known, see Huffmann (2011). Porphyry excells at two stylistic virtues: clarity and purity (*VS* IV 9–11). Maximus' effect on audiences is that of amazement ((κατα)πλήττειν, *VS* VII 2, 24, 38) and his daring character (δεινὸς καὶ τολμηρός) is explictely contrasted with Chrysanthius' (*VS* VII 40, Chrysanthius' words). Eustathius: *VS* VI 44, p. 27, 23–24. Chrysanthius' rhetorical skills were impressive and finely homed, but he only exhibited a certain degree of "rhetorical solemnity" (πομπικώτερον) when "hard pressed" (*VS* XXIII 8). Regarding Priscus' character Eunapius is quite explicit: βαρύς (cod. A) καὶ ὀγκῶδες κατὰ τὸ ἦθος (*VS* VIII 4, p. 59, 19–20): [I suggest:] he was habitually pompous and solemn (*vel sim.*).

positions in the structure of the *Lives*. Secondly, it looks back to the exemplars of biographical writing that Eunapius considers and evaluates in the prologue to the *Lives*, and ponders about whether they could provide us with some clues for a better and richer understanding of the literary underpinnings of Eunapius' *Lives*.[9] Thirdly, it pays special attention to the use of rhetorical terms, particularly to those related to the varieties of style as encoded in the technical treatises in circulation during the Imperial Age.

My aim is not to contest the religious import of Eunapius' *Lives* as a witness to a trend in the philosophical ideals and its literary presentation in Late Antiquity. I only contend that there is more in the literary texture of the *Lives* than a series of instances of the hagiographical discourse for celebrating the Neoplatonic saint.[10] There are different ways of understanding Socrates as an emblematic figure of the philosophical life and these differences bear on the tensions and difficulties that philosophers had to face in order to be up to the task in a turbulent world.

2 Chrysanthius' Socratic Style

Chrysanthius of Sardes is undoubtedly a philosopher of the 'holy' species, vital to Eunapius' biographical design.[11] As the beloved master of Eunapius himself, it was only to be expected that his life would come to special prominence in the setting of the *Lives* as a whole. Chrysanthius' life, indeed, is placed in quite a relevant position in the collection: it comes after the series of philosophers, rhetoricians, and physicians, as if summing up the excellence of all arts. Still, in addition to its exceptional place in the *Lives*, Chrysanthius' life distinguishes itself by the fact that in it, in order to describe the philosophical excellence

9 If we compare it with other introductory sections in ancient biographical works, this prologue is unique by virtue of its extension and variety of literary references (authors, works, modes and types of biography). In this respect, Eunapius' prologue to his *Lives* deserves its rightful place, just below his admired Plutarch, in what we could call 'the ancient biographical architext'. On the architext and its different uses in intertextual research, see Bauks; Horowitz, and Lange (2012).

10 We owe the concept of 'hagiographical discourse' to van Uytfanghe (2009: 350 ff.). In our view, the 'discours hagiographique' could be considered a kind of architext. However, as Uytfanghe points out, (2009: 372) "le discours hagiographique n' est pas la seule grille ou clé d' interprétation de la *Vie d'Apollonius*". We think the same could be said about Eunapius' *Lives*.

11 *VS* XXIII. On Chrysanthius, see Goulet (1994; 2014: 507); Penella (1990: 75–78).

of his master, Eunapius puts forward the Socratic model in a way that differs considerably with other mentions or allusions to Socrates in the rest of the *Lives*.

Eunapius made this vivid characterization of his master relatively late in his biography. The mention of Chrysanthius' splendid boyhood, which foreshadows the kind of philosopher he will be, might have been better placed at the beginning of his life, where some traits of Chrysanthius' character, also reminiscent of Socratism (e.g. his extraordinary strength and endurance of toils), are mentioned too.[12] However, it is after drawing a long *synkrisis* with Maximus of Ephesus, as regards to their quite different ways of dealing with divination, that Eunapius makes the unique Socratic vocation of his teacher explicit.

Indeed, Eunapius mentions the Socratic inspiration of Chrysanthius only after the story of their reading of the omens regarding Julian's insistent invitation to the court. The same story has already been told in the life of Maximus, which raises the question regarding the point of repeating the same story in Chrysanthius' life.[13] In our view, the narratives trigger a connection with one of the best-known motives in the Socratic tradition, namely, that of the obedience we owe to God, under whichever constraints we may find ourselves.[14] In his respectful attitude to divine signals, Chrysanthius, in contrast to the 'violent' attempts by Maximus to make them conform to his will,[15] stood firm and held his position against the will of the emperor himself and his hasty summons This is a Socratic trait of character that Eunapius confirms immediately:

> Such was the man's whole disposition, whether it was that in him the Platonic Socrates had come to life again, or in his ambition to imitate him he carefully formed himself from boyhood on his pattern. For an unaffected and indescribable simplicity was manifest in him (τὸ τε γὰρ ἐπιφαινόμενον ἁπλοῦν καὶ ἀφελὲς) and dwelt in his speech, and moreover there was about every word of his a charm that enchanted the hearer.[16]

To our mind, this unique Socratic depiction of a core figure in the economy of the work deserves special attention, mainly because of the way philosoph-

12 *VS* XXIII 7.

13 *VS* VII 37–43 and XXIII 11–16.

14 Pl., *Ap.* 28d–e.

15 *VS* VI 85; VII 39: ἐκβιάζεσθαι τὴν τοῦ θείου φύσιν. The vocabulary of violence is frequent in the *Lives* (βία, βίαιος, βιαίως, βιάζεσθαι, ἐκβιάζεσθαι, δυσεκβιαστός), but only Maximus is said to exert force on the divine.

16 *VS* XXIII 20–26.

ical *and stylistic* values become intertwined in the portrayal of Chrysanthius. The example of Socrates does not just appear as a role that could be impersonated occasionally;[17] for Chrysanthius, Socrates became a sort of mirror, a lifelong source for philosophical identity.[18] He was the benchmark of a constant and devoted self-shaping activity, performed from an early age, which resulted not only in a peculiar philosophical character, but also (and firstly) *in a style of speech*, that adequately suits the simplicity and straightforwardness of his manners.[19] Certainly, grace and charm of his speech is to be found in other lives, so it could be considered a trait in the 'hagiographical' stylization of the neoplatonic sage.[20] That said, apart from the fact that Iamblichus himself blatantly lacks this blessing, the point here is that the "verbal Aphrodite" so visible in Chrysanthius' discourses and a simple and unaffectionated *style* are tightly knit together. *Only* in the case of Chrysanthius, the irresistible charm, which works with the force of a magic spell, results from this kind of speech.[21] At the same time, this concentrated stylistic characterization opens up an extensive description of his 'sagesse socratique', meaning that style and philosophical manners become uniquely entangled in his portrait.

The brief description of Chrysanthius' style is expressed in highly codified rhetorical terms, which reveal the importance and sophistication of Eunapius'

17 The possibility of 'impersonating' Socrates and adapting his protreptic style to new audiences is put to good use by Dio of Prusa, see Nesselrath (2009).

18 Chrysanthius' Socratic leaning bears comparison with Eugenius', Themistius' father, who also emulated Socrates according to Themistius himself (*Or*. 20.9, 239A–C). Nevertheless, for Eugenius and Themistius the Socratic paradigm inspires an ideal of public life (see Themistius, XXXIV 10) and is closer to the Socrates we will see in the case of Sopatros and Alypius. On Socrates in Themistius' orations, see De Vita (2006).

19 The expression ζῆλον καὶ μίμησιν has a clear stylistic leaning, cf. *VS* XVI 5: Λιβάνιος, ἐκ τοῦ ζήλου καὶ τῆς παραθέσεως τῆς κατὰ μίμησιν. A detailed review of style terms used Eunapius in the *Lives* can be read in Goulet (2014: 397–401).

20 Plutarch (*VS* I 3); Eustathius (*VS* VI 39, 42); Maximus (VII 17); Eusebius (VII 16); Milesius (IX, 81); Libanius (XVI 6, 18); Chrysanthius (XXIII 20). Grace in speech is glaringly missing in Iamblichus (V 3) and in Priscus (VIII 4).

21 In the *Lives*, simplicity and unaffectedness (ἁπλοῦς, ἀφελής) are predicated of Chrysanthius only, *VS* XXIII 18, 20, 33. On the contrary, Plotinus' and Iamblichus' style are not exactly commended. On Plotinus, *VS* IV 10: τῷ λοξῷ καὶ αἰνιγματώδει τῶν λόγων βαρύς. On Iamblichus *VS* V 3: οὔτε γὰρ εἰς Ἀφροδίτην αὐτοῦ καὶ χάριν τὰ λεγόμενα βέβαπται, οὔτε ἔχει λευκότητα τινα καὶ τῷ καθαρῷ καλλωπίζεται, and *VS* V 17: τὰ γεγραμμένα δὲ ὑπὸ τῆς συνθήκης ἐμελαίνετο καὶ νέφος αὐτοῖς ἐπετρέχετο βαθύ. Eunapius is particularly reluctant to attribute lack of clarity to Iamblichus, since clarity is the most fundamental virtue in style, in rhetoric and also in philosophy.

stylistic judgement of the philosophers. This assessment continues an important tradition of rhetorical studies, of which a rhetor such as Eunapius could not be unaware. Since the beginnings of the Imperial era, the qualities of simplicity of speech, charm, general accessibility, and the capacity for rendering the speech persuasive by means of *ethos*, were distinguished as a type of style which had as its models Lysias and the Socratic authors.[22] In the late first century AD, Dio of Prusa gives an apposite expression to this literary ideal when he asserts that "No branch of literature ... could possibly be pleasing to the ear if lacked the Socratic grace".[23] Amongst the Socratics, Xenophon is highly commended and his stylistic excellence associated with a magic effect:

> for not only are his ideas clear and simple (σαφῆ καὶ ἁπλᾶ) and easy for everyone to grasp, but the character of his style is atractive, pleasing, and convincing, being to a high degree true to life in the representation of character, whith much charm also and effectiveness, so that his power suggests not cleverness but actual wizardry.[24]

Eventually the simple style became integrated in the theory of stylistic types or 'ideas' that developed from the second century AD on and enjoyed considerable success in Late Antiquity, the Byzantine Period and even Modern Age.[25] In one of the most influential treatises of rhetoric of this tradition, that by Hermogenes' *On Types of Style*,[26] simplicity not only combines with other categories

22 D.H., *Dem.* 2 characterizes this style as being λιτὴ καὶ ἀφελὴς καὶ δοκοῦσα κατασκευήν τε καὶ ἴσχυν τὴν πρὸς ἰδιώτην ἔχειν λόγον, in the first part, and is related to the grand style as the other extreme of a musical scale. In the second part, the style is called ἰσχνός. Lysias is the most accomplished model for this kind of style, that makes the speech sound natural. Amongst its cultivators Dionysius includes τὸ Σωκρατικόν διδασκαλεῖον πᾶν, ἔξω τοῦ Πλάτωνος. Dionysius does not consider Xenophon as representative of the simple style.

23 Dio of Prusa *Or.* XVIII 13.

24 Dio of Prusa *Or.* XVIII 14. In the following centuries, the interest in Xenophon's works and the quality of his writing only increased, and treatises were devoted to explore the extraordinary subtleties of a style that portrays absolute unaffectedness and, by means of it, turns out to be all the more persuasive. On the importance of this passage of Dio that marks a change in the appreciation of Xenophon for political oratory, see Pernot (2014b). The complex reception of Xenophon in the rhetorical treatises has been extensively dealt with by Chiron (2014).

25 On theories of style and the place of the simple type in them, see Pernot (1993a: 333–421, esp. 339–367); Rutherford (1998: 64–79), and Patillon (2002: vol. I xxiii–lxiv; vol. II 45–68).

26 In Hermogenes' treatise, simplicity/plainness is subordinate to the idea of character (*ethos*) together with sweetness, pungency or wittiness, moderation, veracity and gravity,

of style to create rich and complex stylistical textures; it can be elaborated 'methodically' to produce some "superficial deepness" (ἐπιπόλαιος βαθύτης) so that profound or subtle thoughts can be given an air of nonchalance.[27]

Eunapius states that the pattern which his master tried to shape himself on was none other than the 'Platonic Socrates'.[28] This statement can be interpreted in a 'literal' way, as if Chrysanthius had been following the Socrates depicted in Plato's dialogues. However, in our view, a rhetorical interpretation of the expression 'Platonic Socrates' would also be acceptable and even more appropriate for explaining the effects on Chrysanthius of this devotion to Socrates.

In Hermogenes' treatise, Plato appears as the canon for (non political) panegyric prose discourse by virtue of his perfection in combining all sorts of stylistic ideas, mainly those of solemnity and simplicity.[29] The second one can be found in its purest form in the Socratic Xenophon and Aeschines, who are ranked as inferior precisely because of their limited use of the stylistic palette. In Plato's panegyric discourse, however, simplicity and unaffectedness permeate the other qualities of style, except when pure solemnity is required.[30] According to our interpretation, Eunapius' 'Platonic Socrates' stands for the simple style of the rhetorical tradition, understood as a dimension of the all encompassing Platonic style. Chrysanthius, therefore, not only instantiates a life of true philosophy, following in the steps of Socrates; he is the very embodiment of an idea of style from which his philosophical manners seem to emanate.

As in style, in life too Chrysanthius followed Socrates' peculiar ways of making philosophy accesible, humble and plain, and as such he proved himself the truest follower of his master Aedesius, who had no qualms whatsoever

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and is related to other major ideas (and subordinates) as clarity, grandeur, beauty, and power in various ways of different degrees of complexity. The treatise has been explored by Patillon (2010: 103–300); see also his recent edition (2012).

27 Hermogenes, *On Types of Style* II 3, 18 and II 5, 1–5 says that these stylistic effects abound in Xenophon's works. Hermogenes, *On Types of Style* II 9, 29–33.

28 The expression appeared also in the *Histories*, fr. 28, 5, l. 5 Blockey.

29 Roughness and vehemence excepted, see Hermogenes, *On Types of Style* II 10, 23.

30 D.H., *Dem.* 5 expresses himself in plain, simple and unartifical language (ἰσχνὴν καὶ ἀφελῆ καὶ ἀποίητον), his style is extraordinarily "agreable and pleasant". Interestingly enough, Dionysius pointed out that Plato's insufficencies derived from the fact that (*Dem.* 6) "although he was brought up on the rigourous plainness and precision of the Socratic dialogues, he did not remain constant on these, but fell in love with the artificial styles of Gorgias and Thucydides". Trans. from Usher (1974–1985).

about talking to shopkeepers and artisans, much to the disapproval of some of his disciples.[31] At the same time, Chrysanthius truly was profound in all his simplicity.[32] He was understanding of the different qualities of his interlocutors and sensitive to their shortcomings.[33] Chrysanthius resorted to moderation by hiding his own encyclopaedic knowledge, and to a mild irony by displaying some educated admiration towards those so conceited that they are unaware of their own ignorance.[34] The holiness of Chrysanthius was, then, of a genuine 'Socratic' quality that, as in the case of Alypius, was associated with logical skills.[35] Indeed, Chrysanthius was also a consummate dialectician, more than capable of confounding his contradictors, and even preventing them from taking part in the debate. It is precisely this ability that aroused the admiration of the governor Justus, when he took the assistants to task at a sacrifice because of their ignorance of some ritual details. The response of Chrysanthius reveals not only his religious competence, but also (and more importantly) a high level of sensitivity to fallacies in speech.[36]

In conclusion, Chrysanthius' Socratism provides us with some interesting insights into the variety of the philosophical models implied in Eunapius' work. The details about his characteristic Socratic style are all the more remarkable, because they oppose him diametrically to Iamblichus himself, whose style was so heavily criticized by Eunapius, as well as to other Iamblichean philosophers like Priscus and even Maximus. Chrysanthius' life, then, is not only a metaphor

31 *VS* VIII 6–9. On this anecdote of Aedesius, see the illuminating remarks by Steinrück (2004: 83–86). The Socratic quality of Aedesius' character has been pointed out by Becker (2013: 410).

32 *VS* XXIII 27. Most interestingly, simple style, because of its abilities for deception, is related to circumstances where frankness and free speech can be dangerous, see Pernot (2013: 290 ff.) on the association of Xenophon's style with the *eschematismenos logos*. Schouler (2010) puts forwards an illuminating interpretation of the political overtones in Libanius' *Apology of Socrates*.

33 *VS* XXIII 21. Goulet (2014: vol. 2, 283 t. 3) pointedly remarks that adaptability is also a trait of Libanius' character (VS XVI 10–11), but Libanius' ability is depicted as a manipulative strategy that allows him to please every one, in a way that reminds us of the figure of the flatterer. Chrysanthius, on the contrary, despite not changing his benevolent manners whilst communicating with others, nonetheless managed to give the impression of everyone being highly regarded by him.

34 *VS* XXIII 24–25. The techniques for attenuating [or possibly better "deprecating"] one's own merits and/or the oponent's faults conform the idea of "moderation" (*epieikeia*), according to Hermogenes, *On Types of Style*, II 6.

35 *VS* XXIII 26.

36 *VS* XXIII 42–44.

of the Life of the Holy Man. He gave the philosophic ideal a Socratic twist that was at odds with Iamblichus and some of his most important followers. And it is interesting to note that his teacher of rhetoric Prohaeresius was not stranger to Socratic habits. All in all, it would appear that Eunapius creates a sort of Socratic succesion where philosophy and rhetoric converge, as in his own life.[37]

3 Late Socratic Heroes

Eunapius presents in the *Lives* another variety of the Socratic example. This 'other' Socrates is not celebrated for the simplicity of his character, but represents the dramatic clash of philosophy with politics in corrupt cities.

The latter part of Iamblicus' life is devoted to an encounter with a philosopher called Alypius, an expert in dialectics who dared to challenge Iamblichus in a rather disconcerting way.[38] Iamblichus, annoyed though he was at first at the improper behaviour of Alypius in a debate, later reconsidered his own position, and acknowledged his counterpart's wit and skill.[39] Ultimately, he came to admire Alypius to the point that, after his death, he actually wrote his biography.[40] Eunapius goes into some detail regarding this work with a finely tuned perception of the narrative structure and stylistic quality of the biography. However, his judgement of it is rather negative. He considers that Iamblichus has not managed to give Alypius his due and points out some shortcomings in content and style that make the biography come across as a failed portrayal of that philosopher.

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37 On the devices for constructing group identity in intelectual circles on the Empire (amongst which the construction of succesions), see Eshleman (2012: 177 ff.).

38 Eunapius provides our only source for Alypius' life, see Goulet (1989; 2014: 494; vol. 2, 168 ff.).

39 In the debate Alypius confronted Iamblichus with an awkward question that he considered alien to philosophy: "tell me, philosopher, a rich man is either unjust or the heir of the unjust, yes or no?". Iamblichus, who came from an opulent family (*VS* V 1), felt uncomfortable and left the debate. According to Lim (1995: 49–50), Iamblichus actually expected to be asked philosophical questions that call for an extended response (cf. Philostr., *VA* I, 17), not logical dilemmas full of personal innuendoes. Alypius' proposal is an instance of the fallacy called 'presupposition of a question', see Steinrück (2004: 17).

40 Walter (2008) is of the view that Iamblichus' biography was not complimentary to Alypius, and that Eunapius plays down the negative tones of the work. Goulet (2014: vol. 2, 171 ff.) is not convinced by Walter's arguments.

As for Alypius, he was definitely not a philosopher of Iamblichan persuasion. Certainly, his physique was of the spiritual kind that is the sign of closeness to the divine,[41] but his philosophical interests were quite restricted, above all when compared to the huge encyclopaedic and theurgic competence of Iamblichus and his followers. Alypius, nonetheless, deserved the dignity of a biography by Iamblichus and, moreover, a telling sketch of his philosophical career framed by the life of Iamblichus.

It is difficult to see how all this could contribute to the picture of Iamblichus as a holy man.[42] It does, in fact, paint him in an unexpected light: he is learning from a philosopher of quite a different orientation. Eunapius is not clear enough about Alypius' philosophical expertise, but the term he uses (συνουσία) to describe it cursorily and the fact that "no one has published a book by him" are suggestive of a Socratic lineage.[43] The fact that he underwent prosecution, which he endured with remarkable fortitude, is another telling detail that further underlines the Socratic ascendance. It seems as if Iamblichus, as presented by Eunapius, were aware of a limitation in his own philosophical personality, something that he only perceived when confronted by a philosopher such as Alypius.

At the level of composition, Iamblichus' *Life of Alypius* failed because of a sort of pervasive opaqueness that Eunapius resists qualifiying as obscurity.[44] However, his main criticism is more concerned with the facts recorded in the biography, and the way they are set out. Iamblichus did not mention Alypius' discourses, although they definitely would have deserved mention.[45] This is

41 *VS* V 16. See on Chrysanthius' son Aedesius, XXIII 44.

42 As a matter fact, criticism fits badly in hagiographic discourse, see Uytfanghe (2009: 361 ff.), but it is to be expected in pagan lives, see Goulet (2001: 13–14).

43 *VS* V 27. The meaning of the passage is far from clear, since we know that Iamblichus was able to use an extensive *logos* (apparently by Alypius himself) when writing his biography. In our view, the passage is concerned with the circulation of Alypius' texts, not the actual writing of books by him. Apart from that, Eunapius may have been considering only academic books, so the autobiographical discourse would not have been taken into account as a *dialexis*, see Becker (2013: 241). However, in Giangrande's view (1954: 80), Eunapius critizices the fact that Iamblichus only made use of the *makros logos*, but not of the *dialexeis*.

44 *VS* V 30: τὰ γεγραμμένα δὲ ὑπὸ συνθήκης ἐμελαίνετο καὶ νέφος ἐπετρέχετο βαθύ. The criticism of Iamblichus' style is very similar to the one at Plato's grand style levelled by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Dem.* 5). On Eunapius' reluctance to describe Iamblichus' style as obscure see *supra* note 22.

45 *VS* V 30. According to Becker (2013: 241), this criticism was directed towards Alypius' discourse.

an important philosophical deed by itself, as can be seen in other Eunapian lives. Besides, Iamblichus did mention Alypius' journeys to Rome (another remarkable fact in a life of a philosopher),[46] but neither did he add the *causes* for it nor was he able to show Alypius' greatness of soul.[47]

The text we read in Wright's edition of the *Lives* is οὔτε τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐνεφαίνετο μέγεθος, which seems almost to be a quotation of a famous programatic text by Plutarch.[48] However, Richard Goulet in his recent edition restores the reading συνεφαίνετο of the main manuscript. The intertextual reference to Plutarch is not lost though. Eunapius' variations on the verb φαίνεσθαι hint at his appropiation of Plutarch's "architextual" vocabulary in order to address a nuanced criticism of Iamblichus shortcomings as a biographer.[49] For Eunapius, actions are not interesting as a means to convey traits of character, but as something to be presented *along with* their causes in order to enhance their significance.

The following criticism makes this even clearer. Eunapius complains that Iamblichus made only a passing reference to Alypius' many followers and admirers, but in his book "it is not shown that he either said or did anything remarkable" (ὅτι δὲ εἶπεν ἢ ἔπραξεν ἀξιόλογον οὐκ ἐπιφαίνεται).[50] The terms of the formula recall Eunapius' celebration of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* in the prologue, as if they were the model for biographical writing.[51] Nonetheless, it is not the revelation of a character, but the *exhibition* of Alypius' deeds and words that Eunapius misses in Iamblichus' work. According to Eunapius, Iamblichus was incapable of *displaying* Alypius' deeds in a way apropriate to their importance. In other words, it seems as if Eunapius were asking Iamblichus to do a historian's job.[52]

The comparison that follows between the art of the painter and that of the biographer displays the same intertextual strategy. The art of the painter is *not*

46 *VS* V 31. See IV 6, where Porphyrius is said to want to "enchain the city by his wisdom".

47 *VS* V 31.

48 Plu., *Alex.* 1 1: πρᾶγμα βραχὺ πολλάκις καὶ ῥῆμα καὶ παιδιά τις ἔμφασιν ἤθους ἐποίησε μᾶλλον … τῶν περὶ τὴν ὄψιν εἰδῶν οἷς ἐμφαίνεται τὸ ἦθος. On the passage and its methodological import see Duff (1999: 14–22).

49 The verb συμφαίνεσθαι is a *hapax*, but Plutarch uses once the verv συμφαντάζεσθαι (*De E ap. Delph.*, 329e). Eunapius is fond of composite verbs with συν-, a trait characteristic of *koine* Greek, see Giangrande (1956: 67). On the idea of ancient "biographic architext" see Campos-Daroca (forthcoming).

50 *VS* V 21.

51 *VS* II 3: οἱ καλούμενοι βίοι τῶν ἀρίστων κατὰ ἔργα καὶ πράξεις ἀνδρῶν.

52 On Eunapius' conception of the relationship between biography and historiography as being complementary, see Baldini (2001) and Goulet (2014: 103–123).

inspirational for Eunapius, as it was for Plutarch.[53] In the case of Eunapius, it illustrates the absolute failure of Iamblichus as portraitist of Alypius, with all his best intentions. For a positive example of the paradigm of painting for writing we should turn our attention to Eunapius as a historian, when confronted with the portrait of emperors.[54]

The last part of this rather severe critical review confirms the idiosyncratic criteria that Eunapius applies to Iamblichus' work on Alypius. Eunapius says that Iamblichus "clearly shows" (ἐμφαίνει) the punishment and suffering endured by Alypius himself in the courts of law, "yet the causes of these things and their purposes he was neither fitted by nature to expound like one versed in politics, nor was it his purpose" (αἰτίας δὲ ἐπί τούτοις ἤ προφάσεις οὔτε πεφυκὼς ἐξηγεῖσθαι πολιτικῶς οὔτε προελόμενος).[55] Eunapius appears to be looking for something completely alien not only to Iamblichus' intentions and capabilities, but also to the biographical tradition as we know it, most specifically to the Plutarchan branch Eunapius appears to value so highly. Causal explanations do not belong to the province of the ancient biographer, but they do to that of the historian of political actions. Historians have to include causal considerations in order to allow a proper understanding of the facts and a proper evaluation of merits and reponsibilities in history. According to Eunapius, this kind of 'political exegesis' is at odds with Iamblichus' nature and intentions, and the lack of it ruins the work as a biography.[56]

The critical examination ends in a paradoxical judgement on Iamblichus' achievements as a biographer. Notwithstanding all the flaws in his work, Iamblichus allows the reader to catch a glimpse of the virtues he admired so highly in Alypius, namely, his endurance and imperturbability amid the dangers he faced and a style of speech well suited to these virtues.[57] As in Chrysanthius' case, Eunapius ties actions and speech firmly together. At the same time, the

53 *VS* V 32. An overview of the painter metaphor in biographical literature can be read in Becker (2013: 57–60, 241–242) who explores in detail the importance of the issue in Eunapius' *Lives*.

54 Eunapius, *Histories*, fr. 50 Blockey.

55 *VS* V 33.

56 The close connection of vivid presentation and causal explanation is a much discussed topic of historiographical writing from the Hellenistic Period on, see Pédech (1964: 257–258). The different meanings of ἔμφασις in rhetorical theory are elucidated by Rutherford (1988).

57 *VS* V 33. This possibility is reserved for those who are "most keen-sighted". The verb ὀξυδορκῶ is used in the prologue to describe the kind of reading that allows biographical data to be gleaned from the works of philosophers, *VS* I 8.

virtues that adorned Alypius were also those which Plutarch admired in some of his heroes. They were also redolent of a Socratic scent, and the same could be said of his excruciating experiences in court.[58]

It is worth noting that the only merit that Eunapius concedes to Iamblichus as a biographer would be, according to a strict reading of Plutarch's programatic statements, a sign of literary success. If Iamblichus managed to let us see Alypius' (Socratic) virtues through the vivid presentation of his sufferings, that would be the mark of a succesful biography in Plutarch's eyes.[59] Yet, Eunapius is not interested in character, but in greatness of soul, something that apparently needs, in the case of Alypius, a political kind of discourse to be presented properly. All in all, what Eunapius seems to demand in his bitter criticism of Iamblichus is a kind of philosophical biography that could rival historiography in recording the deeds of the great men and adducing the causes that explain the significance of their actions.[60]

Indeed he gives us one sketch of this kind. In the chapters devoted to the life of Aedesius he inserts the narrative of Sopatros' political career.[61] As a disciple of Iamblicus and one of the leaders after the death of the master, Sopatros displays the spiritual elevation characterizing this philosophical "harvest",[62] but his extraordinary qualities drove him in a direction opposite to his companion Aedesius, culminating in a story of dramatic rise and fall. Sopatros' motives were laid bare by Eunapius, in a way clearly reminiscent of the old Platonic pretensions to position the philosopher as close to the king as possible. Sopatros, who aspired "to dominate and convert by his arguments the purpose and headlong policy of Constantine" (ὡς τὴν Κωνσταντίνου πρόφασίν τε καὶ φορὰν τυραννήσων καὶ μεταστήσων τῷ λόγῳ),[63] appears initially to suceed. Eunapius also adds the causes of his fall: a combination of envy at the court and the action

58 See Becker (2013: 243).

59 Plu., *Nic.*, 1, 5; see Duff (1999: 25): "Plutarch had claimed that the great events or exploits (πράξεις) often do not reveal character; here he seems to be claiming that they can and do, if they involve great suffering".

60 According to Hermogenes, solemnity is an idea subordinated to grandeur, and in the overview of authors that follows the systematic exposition, the author who takes this to the extreme is Thucydides (*On Types of Style* II 12, 24). The idea of solemnity is particularly associated to Plato's style in Hermogenes, see Walsdorff (1927: 59–61).

61 See s.v. 'Sopater 1' in Jones; Martindale, and Morris (1971–1992: 846), and Penella (1990: 49–57, 126–130).

62 *VS* VI 7: "Sopater, more eloquent than the rest because of his lofty nature and greatness of soul (ψυχῆς μέγεθος), would not condescend to associate with ordinary men".

63 *VS* VI 7. On Constantine's thoughts and plans alluded here, see Becker (2013: 253–254).

of Fortune, who never sleeps. Eunapius goes into details to narrate the ruin of Sopatros as a reenactement of Socrates' prosecution and trial. In order to do so, he draws a (far-fetched) parallel between the Athens dominated by comic theatre and the city of Constantine ruled by the mob engrossed in coarse spectacles.[64] In this brief life of a disciple of Iamblichus, a different Socrates 'comes to life'. Though in this case Socrates does not provide the paradigm of a philosophical *ethos*, but is subservient to a 'political explanation' of the fate of the philosopher in corrupt cities.

Most probably, the brief and dramatic life of Sopatros, as told by Eunapius, is not as exemplary as that of other philosophers. When we consider the reservations of Chrysanthius about attending the court, together with the tribulations of Maximus after his short political adventure, Sopatros' career may come across as rather unattractive. Sopatros' life is nonetheless an example of philosophical life, one that embodies the legitimate aspirations of philosophers to rule.[65] Setting aside the fletting episode of Julian's reign, Eunapius' times were, in his view, quite hard for men of 'hellenic' learning.[66] They would be so specially for philosophers, who had to deliberate between involvement and retirement, or even concealement. The alternative does not present itself as a choice that could be decided just in terms of the demands and duties of the philosopher vis-à-vis the political community. It is an historical and even existential issue that requires a fine evaluation of the circumstances under the guidance of the gods.

In both cases there is a Socratic model for inspiration. Socrates' prosecution provides the blueprint for political life in corrupt cities, whereas Socrates' *ethos* can be reborn and lead a life of philosophical conversation constantly in touch with the divine. To articulate this in his *Lives*, Eunapius elaborates on some

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64 *VS* VI 10–15. On the parallel between Socrates and Sopatros and its historical significance see Chuvin (1990: 51–52). The Socratic example appears as a critical foil for the activities of two of Sosipatra's sons, who were devoted to lawsuits, *VS* VI 97–100.

65 On the conditions and limits of philosophers regarding political action (specially fortune/fate), see O'Meara (2003: 133–139). The Platonic longing for philosophical rule was frequently echoed in the Imperial Age. Nevertheless, in order to be faithful to Plato's original formulation, philosophers should not show themselves all too eager for power; on the contrary, positions of power should be accepted reluctantly. In the fourth century, the rhetorical display of this reluctance as yearning for a life of retirement and contemplation became an important part of the ruler's self-presentation, see Elm (2012: 70–74).

66 Eunapius belonged to the generation that followed the 'final pagan generation', and saw the changes of the period in a more conflictive way and reacted to them 'vigorously', see Watts (2015).

basic rhetorical ideas about the different qualities of style and the ways they were used to describe and assess the authors that deserved study and imitation. On the one hand, there are the *praxeis* of the philosophers, usually the concern of historiography and the grand style; on the other hand, the life devoted to philosophical conversation and the style whereby modest things and actions can be shown to be great, even the greatest. As Plato paradeigmatically showed in his writings, both styles can and should be combined in a work of philosophical aspirations, and Eunapius did just that in his work through the varieties of the Socratic exemple.

CHAPTER 9

Harmonia's Necklace (Nonn. *D.* 5.135–189): A Set of Jewellery, *ekphrasis* and a Narrative Node

Laura Miguélez-Cavero

According to Theon, author of the earliest treatise of *Progymnasmata* or preliminary rhetorical exercises, an ἔκφρασις (*ekphrasis*) is a composition that exposes in detail (λόγος περιηγηματικός) and brings what is portrayed clearly before sight (ὑπ' ὄψιν ἄγων ἐναργῶς τὸ δηλούμενον—Theon *Prog.* 118.7.8).[1] This definition illustrates to what point *ekphrasis* exceeded its translation as simply "description" and implied a complex interplay of rhetoric, visuality/visibility, imagination and suggestion.[2] *Ekphrasis* is thus a powerful space for interrogation on the intersections of rhetoric and the society that produces and uses it: artistic and literary trends, perceptions on images and their propagandistic exploitation are all somehow reflected in these compositions.

A book on rhetorical strategies in late antique literature would be incomplete without a chapter on *ekphrasis*, especially since Michael Roberts published in 1989 his *The Jeweled Style*, a subtle invitation to appreciate the visual aesthetic that informs late antique poetry, but an overview of the rhetorical and literary impact of *ekphrasis* in late antique poetry would exceed the limits

1 For a good overview on what *ekphrasis* meant in Antiquity, see Webb (2009).

2 Compare the definition given by Mitchell (1994: 152): "ekphrasis, the verbal representation of visual representation". Mitchell analyses three moments of realisation of the reader of an ekphrasis (1994: 152–159): ekphrastic indifference (grown out of a common-sense perception that ekphrasis is impossible: a verbal representation cannot represent its object in the same way a visual representation can), ekphrastic hope or fascination (the impossibility of ekphrasis is overcome in metaphor when we discover that language can make us see in a different sense: once the estrangement of the image/text division is overcome a verbal icon or image-text arises in its place) and ekphrastic fear (it occurs when we sense that the difference between verbal and visual representation may collapse and the figurative nature of ekphrasis might become real: as a consequence we try to regulate the borders between the senses, modes of representation and objects proper to each). More recently Zeitlin (2013: 17): "*Ekphrasis* is a slippery topic … [It can be] defined as a rhetorical exercise, a literary genre (or mode), a narrative digression, a species of description, or a poetic (even metapoetic or metarepresentational) technique … involving aesthetic considerations, theories of vision, modes of viewing, mental impressions, and the complex relationships between word and image".

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of this article. Instead, the following pages focus on one particular *ekphrasis*, that of the necklace given by Aphrodite to Harmonia as a wedding present in the *Dionysiaca* of Nonnus of Panopolis (5.135–189).[3] I shall discuss how a late antique reader would have responded to it, both imaginatively and intellectually, and explore Nonnus' play with visual and literary traditions. Nonnus' readers did not expect this description to refer to a real, existing object:[4] by definition *ekphraseis* did not seek to represent a tangible reality, but to appeal to the images the listener or reader preserved in their memory, defined by cultural conventions and values.[5] On the other hand, how the readers constructed the image suggested by Nonnus was inevitably informed by literary and visual parallels, by what they had seen and read before,[6] which is why this paper starts with a preliminary overview of the connections of the description and the world in which it was produced.

The second section reviews the ekphrastic strategies at work in Nonn. *D.* 5.135–189, contending that they are similar to those operative in other late antique works, and were designed to appeal to contemporary tastes. Finally, the third section illustrates how the *ekphrasis* seeps on the *Dionysiaca* as a whole,[7] both in its most immediate context as a form of characterisation of Harmonia, and as a narrative node that grounds later plot developments and extradiegetic connections. The latter point wants to contribute to long-standing efforts to understand the late antique conception of narrative.[8]

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3 Greek text from Vian (1976–2006); translation adapted from Rouse, Rose and Lind (1940). Nonnus of Panopolis was an Egyptian Christian poet who wrote first the *Paraphrase of the Gospel of John* (21 books) and then the *Dionysiaca*. He lived in the fifth century AD. On Nonnus' works, date and religion, see now Accorinti (2016). On the *ekphrasis* in the *Dionysiaca*, see Faber (2016).

4 Nugent (1990: 31): "From Achilles' shield to Thetis' coverlet, the narrative exuberance of *ekphrasis* is often *ipso facto* impossible to contain within two (or three) physical dimensions: it is a vision necessarily conveyed verbally, and the attempt to read its protean images back into an original object may be mistaken".

5 On the interplay of memory and imagination, see Webb (1997: esp. 236, 238); Leader-Newby (2004: 133); Roberts (1989: 69–70).

6 In *De Trinitate* 8.6.68–89 Augustine describes how, when he hears a description of Alexandria (the topic of the exercise of description in Aphth. *Prog.* 12.4.12 Patillon—see also Ach. Tat. 5.1), a city he has never seen by himself, he imagines it as best he can by drawing on his knowledge of the closest sight within his experience, the city of Carthage.

7 Whitmarsh (2002: 111): "ekphrastic 'contagion': the power of the visual icon to infect its surrounding discourses with ontological and perceptual uncertainty. Ekphraseis, that is to say, *seep*".

8 Roberts (1989); Nugent (1990); Miller (1998). For *ekphrasis* as a proleptic device, Harrison (2001).

1 Harmonia's Necklace: An Overview

The narrative of the *Dionysiaca* begins with the rape of Europa (1.45 ff.), whose disappearance forces her brother Cadmus (Dionysus' maternal grandfather) to leave his home and search for her. Zeus recruits Cadmus for his fight against Typhoeus, the gigantic son of Earth who has brought chaos to the universe and menaces to destabilise it forever. In exchange for his help, Zeus gives Cadmus the hand of Harmonia, daughter of Aphrodite and Ares, raised by Electra in Samothrace.

Electra is instructed by Hermes to please Zeus and the immortals by giving her daughter to Cadmus without a dowry (3.425–444), but Harmonia refuses to marry Cadmus because he is a vagrant and will give her no marriage gifts (4.20–66). The solution to the impasse comes by divine intervention: taking the shape of a girl of the neighbourhood, Aphrodite praises Cadmus' appearance and seduces Harmonia, who then leaves with him (67–176). Their wedding is postponed to book 5, after the foundation of Thebes, and the gods make up for the lack of dowry with their presents (5.125–189): Zeus gives success in all things, Poseidon the gifts of the sea, Hermes a sceptre, Ares a spear, Apollo a bow, Hephaestus a diadem, Hera a golden throne, and Aphrodite a necklace.

… Πολυφράδμων ⟨δ'⟩ Ἀφροδίτη
χρύσεον ὅρμον ἔχοντα λίθων πολυδαίδαλον αἴγλην
λευκὸν ἐρευθιόωντι συνήρμοσεν αὐχένι κούρης,
Ἡφαίστου σοφὸν ἔργον, ὅ περ κάμε Κυπρογενείῃ,
τοξευτῆρος Ἔρωτος ὅπως ὀπτήριον εἴη.
Ἔλπετο γὰρ Κυθέρειαν ἀεὶ βαρύγουνος ἀκοίτης
υἷα τεκεῖν σκάζοντα, ποδῶν μίμημα τοκῆος·
ἀλλὰ μάτην ἐδόκησε, καὶ ἀρτίπον υἷα νοήσας
λαμπόμενον πτερύγεσσιν ὁμοίιον υἱέι Μαίης
ποικίλον ὅρμον ἔτευξεν, ὃς ἀστεροφεγγέι νώτῳ
ὡς ὄφις ἦν ἑλικῶδες ἔχων δέμας.–Οἷα γὰρ αὐτὴ
δίστομος ἀμφίσβαινα μέσῳ μηρύεται ὁλκῷ
ἰὸν ἀποπτύουσα δι' ἀμφοτέροιο καρήνου,
ἀμφελελιζομένη μελέων ἑτερόζυγι παλμῷ,
ἐς κεφαλὴν δὲ κάρηνον ἐφερπύζουσα συνάπτει,
λοξῇ καμπύλα νῶτα περισκαίρουσα πορείῃ·
ὣς ὅ γε ποικίλος ὅρμος ἐαγότα νῶτα τιταίνων
κάμπτετο, κυρτωθεῖσαν ἔχων διδυμάονα δειρήν,
ἀμφιλαφὴς φολίδεσσιν ἐς ὀμφαλὸν ἄχρις ἱκάνων
πλεκτὸς ὄφις δικάρηνος. Ὑπὸ στροφάλιγγι δὲ τέχνης

χρύσεος ὁλκαίης ἐλελίζετο κύκλος ἀκάνθης·
καί οἱ ἑλισσομένης κεφαλὴ πολυδινέι παλμῷ
ψευδαλέον σύριγμα διήρυγεν ἀνθερεῶνος.—
Καὶ στομάτων ἑκάτερθεν, ὅπῃ τέλος ἐστὶ καὶ ἀρχή,
αἰετὸς ἦν χρύσειος, ἅτε πλατὺν ἠέρα τέμνων,
ὀρθὸς ἐχιδναίων διδύμων μεσσηγὺ καρήνων,
ὑψιφανὴς πτερύγων πισύρων τετράζυγι κημῷ·
τῇ μὲν ξανθὸς ἴασπις ἐπέτρεχε· τῇ δὲ Σελήνης
εἶχε λίθον πάνλευκον, ὃς εὐκεράοιο θεαίνης
λειπομένης μινύθει καὶ ἀέξεται, ὁππότε Μήνη
ἀρτιφαὴς σέλας ὑγρὸν ἀποστίλβουσα κεραίης
Ἠελίου γενετῆρος ἀμέλγεται αὐτόγονον πῦρ·
ἄλλῃ μάργαρον εἶχε φαεσφόρον, οὗ χάριν αἴγλης
γλαυκὸν Ἐρυθραίης ἀμαρύσσεται οἶδμα θαλάσσης
λαμπομένης· ἑτέρης δὲ μεσόμφαλος αἴθοπι κόσμῳ
λεπτοφαὴς σέλας ὑγρὸν ἀπέπτυεν Ἰνδὸς ἀχάτης.—
Ἀλλήλαις δ' ἑκάτερθε συναπτομένων κεφαλάων
χάσματα δισσὰ δράκοντος ἀνευρύνοντο καρήνων,
αἰετὸν ἀμφοτέροισι περικλείοντα γενείοις
σύμπλοκον ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα. Δι' εὐφαέος δὲ προσώπου
λυχνίδες ἠκόντιζον ἐν ὄμμασι σύμφυτον αἴγλην
ὀξὺ σέλας πέμπουσαν, ὁμοίιον αἴθοπι λύχνῳ
ἁπτομένῳ.—Κομόων δὲ λίθων πολυειδέι μορφῇ
πόντος ἔην, γλαυκῆς δὲ λίθος χλοάουσα μαράγδου
δεξαμένη κρύσταλλον ὁμόζυγον εἴκελον ἀφρῷ
εἶχε φαληριόωντα μελαινομένης τύπον ἅλμης.
Τῷ ἔνι δαίδαλα πολλὰ τετεύχατο, τῷ ἔνι πάντα
χρυσοφαῆ μάρμαιρεν ἁλίτροφα πώεα λίμνης,
οἷα περισκαίροντα· πολὺς δέ τις ὑγρὸς ὁδίτης
μεσσοφανὴς ἐχόρευεν ἐπιξύων ἅλα δελφίς,
ψευδαλέην δ' ἐλέλιζεν ἑὴν αὐτόσσυτον οὐρήν·
καὶ χορὸς ὀρνίθων ἑτερόχροος, ὧν τάχα φαίης
ἱπταμένων πτερύγων ἀνεμώδεα δοῦπον ἀκούειν.
Οἷον ⟨...
ὅρμον⟩ ἑῇ Κυθέρεια γέρας δωρήσατο κούρῃ
χρύσεον, εὐλάιγγα, παρήορον αὐχένι νύμφης.

[135] Aphrodite, in the deep shrewdness of her mind, / clasped a golden necklace, richly wrought and sparkling with gems, / but showing pale about the girl's blushing neck. / This was a wise work of Hephaestus, who

had made it for the Cyprus-born, / a gift for his first glimpse of archer Eros. / [140] For the heavy-knee husband always expected that Cytherea / would bear him a hobbling son, the image of his father in his feet. / But his thought was mistaken; and when he beheld a son sound of feet, / brilliant, with wings like Maia's son, / he made this variegated necklace, similar to a serpent / [145] with coiling shape, the back shining with stars.

For just / as the amphisbaena of two mouths winds its coils in the centre / and spits her poison from either head, / curls on both sides with the dual vibration of her limbs, / and one head creeping joins the other head, / [150] when she advances jumping on her curved back with slanting gait, / so that variegated necklace twisted shaking its crooked back, / with its pair of curving neck, / which came to meet at the midnipple, a flexible two-headed serpent, / thick with scales. And by art's curving joints / [155] the golden circle of the moving spine bent round, / and the head slid about with undulating movement / and belched a mimic hissing through the jaws.

With the two mouths on each side, where is the beginning and the end, / was a golden eagle that seemed to be cutting the open air, / [160] upright between the serpent's twin heads, / high-shining with fourfold nozzle of the four wings. / One was covered with yellowish jasper, one had the all-white / stone of Selene, which fades as the horned / goddess wanes, and waxes when Mene / [165] new-kindled distils her horn's liquid light / and milks out the self-begotten fire of her father Helios. / Other had the gleaming pearl, which by its gleam / makes the grey swell of the Erythrean Sea sparkle / shining. Right in the middle of the other, in bright beauty, / [170] the Indian agate spat out its liquid light, shining gently. / Where the two heads came together from both sides, / the mouths of the serpent opened a double chasm / to enclose the eagle with both their jaws, / enfolding it from this side and that. Over the shining face, / [175] rubies in the eyes shot their native brilliancy, / which sent forth a sharp gleam, like a fiery lamp when it is kindled.

Adorned with the multiform beauty of the stones / was a sea, and an emerald stone grass-green, / receiving the adjacent foam-like crystal, / [180] showed an image of the white-crested brine becoming dark. / Here all sorts of decorations were fashioned, here all / the brine-bred herds of the deep sparkled in shining gold, / as though leaping about, and many a supple traveller / danced half-seen, the dolphin skimming the brine / [185] and wagging its false tail self-moved; / and a chorus of many-coloured birds—you might almost think / you heard the windy beat of their flapping wings. /

> Such was the present that Cytherea offered her daughter / ⟨… a necklace⟩ / golden, bejewelled, suspended on the bride's neck.

The description is formally a self-contained unit: it starts with Aphrodite adjusting the necklace to Harmonia's neck (135b–137), proposes a genealogy to the object (138–143), compares the necklace with a snake and describes its serpentine elements (144–157); in between the two serpent heads there is an eagle, and the points of contact between the two animals are four gems (158–174a); the eagle itself is decorated with a sea (174b–187). The description concludes where it started, with Aphrodite giving the necklace to Harmonia, as if emerging from a timeless bubble.

The description begins in a traditional manner: Hephaestus gives Harmonia a jewelled diadem, just as in Hes. *Th.* 578–584 he gives Pandora a golden diadem; Hera gives her a golden throne similar to hers, just as in *Il.* 14.238–241 she promises one to Sleep in exchange for his help. The *D.* comprises similar catalogues of gods offering gifts to a bride, including one in which Hephaestus offers a necklace to Persephone (5.578–592).[9] Jewels are frequent too in different erotic contexts: they are gifts for the loved one,[10] especially as a dowry,[11] although the loved one is worth more than gems,[12] and although jewels are only beautiful because they are set in contrast with a woman's beauty.[13] All this is consistent with the frequent use of jewels in Antiquity, sometimes with inlaid gems, as love tokens and love amulets.[14]

We should also note that Aphrodite's necklace was not Nonnus' invention: Pindar (*Pyth.* 3.88–92), Pausanias (3.18.12), Apollodorus (3.25) and Diodorus Siculus (4.2.1, 5.48.5, 5.49.1) narrate how the gods attend the wedding and bring

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9 Nonn. *D.* 5.570–585 (the gods court Persephone), 8.216–263 (Hera wonders who has stolen Semele's maidenhood and suggests that she asks for a suitable bride price), 42.492–496 (Hephaestus and Dionysus court Beroe). Compare Beroe's marriage to Poseidon: 43.383–420a.

10 40.266–268; 42.238–240: ἕδνα δὲ σεῖο πόθοιο, τεῆς κειμήλια νύμφης, / μὴ λίθον Ἰνδῴην, μὴ μάργαρα χειρὶ τινάξῃς, / οἷα γυναιμανέοντι πέλει θέμις ("For love gifts to be treasures for your bride, / do not display the Indian jewel, or pearls, / as is the way of mad lovers").

11 34.172–174: "For the Indian chieftain had received no marriage gift / for his daughter, no precious gold, no bright stone / of the sea [173–174: οὐ λίθον ἅλμης / μαρμαρέην]".

12 4.120–123 Peisinoe on Cadmus; 11.307–312 Dionysus on Ampelos.

13 Nonn. *D.* 5.135–137, 188–189; 42.422–426. Compare the new Posidippus 6.5–6, 7.4–6. Text and translation from Austin and Bastianini (2002).

14 See Henig (2006) and Molesworth and Henig (2011) on love tokens; Michel (2001: cat. nos. 110–114) and Faraone (2011: 54–55), on love amulets.

FIGURE 9.1
Necklace with large open-work disk and snakes' head closure. Third century AD. *Bought in Cairo in the antiquities market, now Walters Art Museum, inv. 57.515.*
© WALTERS ART MUSEUM

presents, including a necklace made by Hephaestus. The "normality" of the introduction contrasts with the strangeness of the gift: the necklace was made by Hephaestus for Aphrodite after the birth of their son Eros (Nonn. *D.* 5.138–144a), and now Aphrodite gives it to the daughter she had with Ares out of wedlock.

The beginning of the description itself is dominated by a double comparison:[15] first a short one with a snake (144b–145a: ὃς ἀστεροφεγγέι νώτῳ /ὡς ὄφις ἦν ἑλικῶδες ἔχων δέμας) and then a long one with an amphisbaena (145b–151: οἷα γὰρ αὐτὴ /δίστομος ἀμφίσβαινα … ὣς ὅ γε ποικίλος ὅρμος).[16] Contemporary audiences would have easily visualised this object, since snakes were common as finials of necklaces,[17] and would appear to look like an amphisbaena (see fig. 9.1). ἑλικῶδες (145) could be taken to refer to the twists of a braided chain (see fig. 9.1), easily assimilated to the scales of a serpent, and particularly shiny (144: ἀστεροφεγγέι νώτῳ).

The comparison with a living snake is enhanced with references to the appearance and behaviour of a real animal, for which Nonnus incorporates

15 This double presentation has antecedents in earlier descriptions of objects: Hesiod's Pandora has the likeness of a maiden (Hes. *Th.* 572: παρθένῳ αἰδοίῃ ἴκελον; *Op.* 63: παρθενικῆς καλὸν εἶδος ἐπήρατον, 71 παρθένῳ αἰδοίῃ ἴκελον) and Posidippus' magnet is like a magnet (17.3–4: τῇιδε μὲν ἕλκει ῥεῖα τὸν ἀντήεντα σίδηρον / μάγνης οἷα λίθος—"On the one hand it easily attracts iron that stands in the way, / just like a magnet").

16 A real animal in Antiquity: Nic. *Ther.* 372–383; Plin. *NH* 30.25; Ael. *NA* 8.8, 9.23.

17 Compare BGU 4.1065 (AD 97), a service contract for a pair of magical bracelets with snake finials (on which Whitehorne [1983]; Gigli Piccardi [2003: 398, n. to 144 ff.]); Russo (1999, 144–145, no. 17); PGM VII 579–590 (Thebes, third century AD), design of a magical phylactery with a snake biting its tail, which encircles and is surrounded by letters.

elements from Nicander's *Theriaca*[18] and his own descriptions of serpents in movement.[19] This improves and vitalises the visibility of the lifeless object, and also praises its workmanship (the necklace is so well-wrought that it looks like a real serpent). At the same time, the remarks on the apparent movement of the inert object and of its sounds (153–158) are curtailed by reminders of the artist's intervention and falseness of the noise (154: ὑπὸ στροφάλιγγι δὲ τέχνης, 157: ψευδαλέον σύριγμα),[20] and some common elements of the descriptions of real snakes are downplayed. In particular, the focus on the animal's movement masks the lack of concern about its dangerousness: there are only brief references to its venom (147: ἰὸν ἀποπτύουσα) and hissing (157: ψευδαλέον σύριγμα διήρυγεν ἀνθερεῶνος).

A golden eagle is then located between the heads of the amphisbaena (158–161):

> Καὶ στομάτων ἑκάτερθεν, ὅπῃ τέλος ἐστὶ καὶ ἀρχή,
> αἰετὸς ἦν χρύσειος, ἅτε πλατὺν ἠέρα τέμνων,
> ὀρθὸς ἐχιδναίων διδύμων μεσσηγὺ καρήνων,
> ὑψιφανὴς πτερύγων πισύρων τετράζυγι κημῷ

> With the two mouths on each side, where is the beginning and the end, / was a golden eagle that seemed to be cutting the open air, / [160] upright between the serpent's twin heads, / high-shining with fourfold nozzle of the four wings.[21]

18 *D.* 5.144: ἀστεροφεγγέι νώτῳ ~ Nic. *Ther.* 376: περιστιγὲς αἰόλον ἔρφος; *D.* 5.145–146: οἷα γὰρ αὐτὴ / δίστομος ἀμφίσβαινα μέσῳ μηρύεται ὁλκῷ ~ Nic. *Ther.* 266: αὐτὰρ ὅγε σκαιὸς μεσάτῳ ἐπαλίνδεται ὁλκῷ; *D.* 5.150: λοξῇ καμπύλα νῶτα περισκαίρουσα πορείῃ ~ Nic. *Ther.* 296–297: γαίῃ ἐπιθλίβων νηδύν, φολίσιν δὲ καὶ ὁλκῷ / παῦρον ὑποψοφέων καλάμης χύσιν οἷα διέρπει. For the movement starting from the middle of the body (*D.* 5.146b: μέσῳ μηρύεται ὁλκῷ, 153: ἀμφιλαφὴς φολίδεσσιν ἐς ὀμφαλὸν ἄχρις ἱκάνων) ~ Nic. *Ther.* 295: μέσσου ὅγ' ἐκ νώτου βαιὸν πλόον αἰὲν ὀκέλλει. The description of the movement of the animal (*D.* 5.148–150 crawls on its side, maintaining a U-shape, similar to that of the necklace around the maiden's neck) does not concur with Aelian *HA* 9.23, according to whom it advances using only one head while the rest of the body follows. For 152 (κυρτωθεῖσαν ἔχων διδυμάονα δειρήν), note [Hes.] *Sc.* 233–234: ἐπὶ δὲ ζώνῃσι δράκοντε / δοιὼ ἀπῃωρεῦντ' ἐπικυρτώοντε κάρηνα.

19 *D.* 5.147: ἰὸν ἀποπτύουσα ~ 1.268, 26.199–200, 43.240–241, 44.112, 48.62. *D.* 5.148–150 is similar to other descriptions of snake movement (e.g. 4.375–376; 22.29–35).

20 A Homeric strategy: Becker (1995: 27–30, 79–86). On the sounds of *ekphrasis*: Leach (2000: 248–250).

21 The notion is repeated in *D.* 5.171–174.

The meaning of line 161, describing the attachment of the eagle to the two serpent heads, is uncertain. Κημός is usually a horse's muzzle,[22] a non epic word, here applied to the element linking the eagle to the serpent in four different places (τετράζυγι), through what are called "four wings" (πτερύγων πισύρων). Several interpretations have been offered: 1) there are two eagles amounting for a total of four wings;[23] 2) one eagle with two wings and two legs;[24] 3) one eagle with four wings, as in oriental daemons with four wings;[25] 4) one eagle attached to the necklace with four wing-like plates.[26] The passage clearly states that there is only one eagle (159: αἰετὸς ἦν χρύσειος, 173: αἰετόν) and the key for the interpretation is πτέρυξ in line 161: the usual meaning is "wing",[27] but it could refer to anything that resembles a wing.[28]

The four points of contact between the serpent heads and the eagle are adorned with four gems: a jasper (162: τῇ μὲν ξανθὸς ἴασπις ἐπέτρεχε), later mentioned as part of the Indian booty (40.256: Ἰνδὸν ἴασπιν); a white selenite which, like the moon, has the ability of reflecting light (162b–166);[29] an Indian pearl, of notorious gleam (167–169a);[30] and a gently-shining Indian agate (169b–170), which also features in Staphylos' palace (18.78). The four stones seem to be chosen for their brilliance as a means of contrast with the golden background in which they are set.[31]

22 *AP* 6.233.1–2 Maecius, 246.1–2 Philodemus or Argentarius; 7.424.9–10 Antipater of Sidon. However, note Hesych. κημός … γυναικεῖον προκόσμημα (LSJ s.v. III).

23 Deonna (1955: 51–120).

24 Rouse, Rose and Lind (1940, vol. I: 181, n. 2): "The wings and legs outspread join with four nozzles". His translation: "high-shining with fourfold nozzle of the four wings".

25 Chuvin (1976: 84–85): "planant haut sur ses quatre ailes au quadruple ferment".

26 Gigli Piccardi (2003: 399, ll. 158–161): "che appare alta a formare un fermaglio con quattro lamine".

27 *D.* 1.135, 2.128, 2.181, 4.241, 5.112, 5.143, 5.187, 6.248, 6.388, 13.8, 18.259 (ἵπτατο κυανέων πτερύγων ἑτερόζυγι παλμῷ), 22.42 (ὑψιπόρων πτερύγων διεμέτρεε δίζυγι παλμῷ), 25.436, 26.193, 26.204, 26.209, 31.15, 33.129, 33.141, 33.192, 37.90, 37.642, 39.163, 42.11, 43.438, 48.635. 40.488–489 (ὁμοπλεκέων …/… πτερύγων) could be wings or feathers.

28 LSJ s.v. πτέρυξ II and III.

29 Compare the description of the phases of the moon in *D.* 4.275–284. A selenite is inset in Hera's crown (32.22–23).

30 Compare Nonn. *D.* 42.238–239; Heliod. 2.30.3: μαργαρίδες … λευκότητι πλεῖστον ἀγλαϊζόμεναι.

31 Plantzos (1999: 36): "The contrast of the translucent stone against the golden background of the ring was thought to be a merit of the jewel", citing Pliny *NH* 37.106 and 112. Compare Luc. *De domo* 8; Ach. Tat. 2.11.3 (ἀμέθυσος δὲ ἐπορφύρετο τοῦ χρυσοῦ πλησίον); Claud. *IV Cons. Hon.* 585–588. Contra Chuvin (1976: 177, n. to 170): "Nonnos nomme deux pierres

Contemporary readers could have imagined this as a "body-chain" or "breast-chain",[32] i.e. four chains passed over the shoulders and under the arms of the wearer, and joined on the chest and the back with a central clasp, for which we have numerous Egyptian examples,[33] and that were considered as suitable jewellery for a bride.[34] A particularly good parallel is the body chain from the Hoxne Treasure (fig. 9.2),[35] combining animal heads as finials of a golden chain and the setting of the gems, as if the lions were gaping towards the now lost pearls, which seem to contain the central amethyst.

There were also bracelets consisting of a broad flat band and a movable part, whose fasteners are formed from cylinders connected by a screw or pin (fig. 9.3), sometimes with pearl finials (fig. 9.4).[36] The movable part, usually round, was adorned with inset jewels (as in fig. 9.3). When combined with animal shapes (figs. 9.3, 9.4)[37] these seem to gape towards the central adornment, of which the finials look like projections or wings. It seems to be the case of a "wing on wing" word game: the two-winged eagle on the central pendant is attached to the serpents on the collar with four wing-like elements.

The eyes of the eagle are inset with rubies (175: λυχνίδες ... ἐν ὄμμασι), the plural implying a frontal representation of the animal, not one facing one side and showing only one eye.[38] Rubies feature in the poem on several other occasions,

blanches et deux pierres fauves, le jaspe et l'agate ... qui imitent ainsi le plumage de l'aigle ... purement décoratif".

32 See Johns (2003) and Hawkesford (2006: 37–45), for a comprehensive introduction.

33 Second century mummy portrait of unknown provenance catalogued in Parlasca (1977: cat. no. 271), now Stadtmuseum, Simeonstift, Trier, inv. no. III/640; terracotta figure of a standing woman, first-second century AD, Fayum, now British Museum (reg. no. 1926,0930.42—see Wamser [2004: cat. no. 494]); terracotta statue of a dancer (late second or early third century AD, Fayum; now Hamburg, Museum für Kunst und Gewerve, Inv. no. 1989.326—see von Falck [1996: cat. no. 120]); terracotta statue of a sitting *orans* female (early third century, Egyptian provenance; now Frankfurt, Liebieghaus, Museum alter Plastik, inv. no. 2400.1717—see von Falck [1996: cat. no. 123a]); gold opus interrasile breast-chain, of a treasure found near Assiut/Lycopolis, or at Sheikh Ibada/Antinoopolis, dated to the sixth century AD, now British Museum (reg. no. 1916,0704.1—see Wamser [2004: cat. no. 493]); Duthuit (1933: pl. XXIX.a).

34 Johns (2010: 27); Hawkesford (2006, 46–47, 54).

35 Description and analysis in Johns (2010: 23–29); Hawkesford (2006).

36 For an overview of late antique examples of this type of bracelet in gold pierced work, see Yeroulanou (1999: 62–64 and cat. nos. 223–231; 2010: 45–47).

37 For fig. 9.5 s. Yeroulanou (1999: cat. no. 234 and page 65); Ross, Boyd, and Zwirn (2005: cat. no. 47).

38 I.e. not the stylised type of eagle reproduced on the mounts of coins used as medallions:

FIGURE 9.2 *Gold body-chain from the Hoxne hoard, now British Museum (Reg. no. 1994,0408.1)* © TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

FIGURE 9.3 *Gold bracelet, serpent-shaped, first-second century* AD*. Found in Dolaucothy, Llandovery, Carmathen (Wales), now British Museum (Reg. no. 1824,*K*/Serpent.2).* © TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

with recurrent references to their brilliance and playing the same etymological name with a lamp (λύχνος),[39] also mentioned by Dionysius Periegetes (328–329).

Yeroulanou (1999), cat. nos. 101 (third century AD, pendant, Autun, Musée Rolin), 102 (third century AD, pendant, The Hague, Koninklijk Kabinet van Munten, 8692), 104 (third century AD, pendant Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Médailles 147), 105 (third century AD, pendant, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Médailles, 149), 106 (third century AD pendant, found in Rennes, now lost).

39 Nonn. *D.* 18.74–75 Staphylos' palace; 32.19–21 Hera's crown; 42.425–426 Dionysus complimenting Beroe; 45.122–124 Dionysus' chaplet.

FIGURE 9.4 *Bracelet with confronted panthers, their forelegs holding a mount for a precious stone. Dumbarton Oaks Collection (Acc. no. 3866).*
© DUMBARTON OAKS, BYZANTINE COLLECTION, WASHINGTON, DC

Spatial connections with the eagle or any other part of the necklace are lacking in what follows. There is a sea adorned with gems of different shapes (177–178a: κομόων δὲ λίθων πολυειδέι μορφῇ / πόντος ἔην), including a brilliant emerald (178b: γλαυκῆς δὲ λίθος χλοάουσα μαράγδου)[40] and close to it a crystal or diamond (179a: δεξαμένη κρύσταλλον ὁμόζυγον).[41] The crystal is of a colour similar to foam (179b: εἴκελον ἀφρῷ) and its combination with the emerald makes the viewer think of the sea, white on the foamy surface and darker below (180: εἶχε φαληριόωντα μελαινομένης τύπον ἅλμης). The text does not say that the two stones "make" the sea, but that the interaction of the light

40 The emerald features in Staphylos' palace (18.80) and Indian booty (40.257 = 45.124).

41 Compare DP 780–782: κείνου δ' ἂν ποταμοῖο περὶ κρυμώδεας ὄχθας / τέμνοις κρυστάλλου καθαρὸν λίθον, οἷά τε πάχνην / χειμερίην ("Around that river's icy banks, you could / extract pure rock-crystal, like hoary frost / in winter"—from Lightfoot [2014]); Heliod. *Aethiop.* 2.30.3 ("emeralds, as green as grass in springtime, their depths glowing with a luster as clear and supple as olive oil").

they shed makes the educated reader think and talk of the sea, as happens in similar literary descriptions of gems.[42]

The sea is inhabited by an unknown number of animals, which glitter with gold (181–183). The narrator mentions one dolphin cavorting in the waters (183–185) and birds of different colours (186: ἑτερόχροος), so real that the viewer thinks he can hear the flapping of their wings (186–187). Both the fish and the birds are at first expected to be made of gold, but Nonnus is not explicit about the material of the birds, and ἑτερόχροος seems to suggest the use of more gems. Nonnus emphasises here, as with the snakes earlier (153–158) the impression of movement, curtailed by references to its falseness.[43] Both dolphins and all sorts of birds were popular in late antique and early Byzantine jewellery.[44]

The pendant or central medallion of the necklace, then, features: a golden eagle with rubies for eyes, a golden sea adorned by at least one emerald and one crystal and several golden fish (182: χρυσοφαῆ … ἁλίτροφα πώεα λίμνης), including one dolphin; birds of different colours seem to fly above the sea. This part of the description is incomplete:[45] the sea is adorned with jewels, of which

42 Ach. Tat. 2.11.2–3 ("The stones vied with each other: [3] the ruby was a rose in a stone, the amethyst's purple flushed next to the gold. In the centre were three stones, their colours shading into one another. The three stones had been set together, so that the base of this single stone was black, the middle part was white but interpenetrating the black, and, next to the white, the remainder of the stone at the peak was a blazing red"—adapted from Whitmarsh [2001]); Heliod. 2.30.3 ("the latter exactly the colour of the sea in the shadow of a tall cliff, sparkling on the surface and a deep violet within"—from Reardon [1989]); and the sea in Hom. *Il.* 13.797–799, and Nonn. *D.* 3.33–34, 12.306.

43 Fish: 181b–183a (τῷ ἔνι πάντα / χρυσοφαῆ μάρμαιρεν ἁλίτροφα πώεα λίμνης, / οἷα περισκαίροντα). Dolphins in particular (183b–185: πολὺς δέ τις ὑγρὸς ὁδίτης /μεσσοφανὴς ἐχόρευεν ἐπιξύων ἅλα δελφίς, / ψευδαλέην δ' ἐλέλιζεν ἑὴν αὐτόσσυτον οὐρήν), with parallels with descriptions of real ones: 1.277, 3.25–26, 39.334–337: εἰς ῥαχίην δελφῖνος ἐποίπνυε λοίγιος αἰχμή, / κυρτὸς ὅπῃ λοφιῇσι συνάπτεται ἰχθύος αὐχήν, / δελφὶς δ' αὐτοέλικτος ἐθήμονι κυκλάδι νύσσῃ / ἡμιθανὴς σκίρτησε χορίτιδος ἅλματι Μοίρης, 43.281–285, 44.245–247, 45.166–167a. For 5.185b (αὐτόσσυτον οὐρήν), see the death of a snake in 25.533b–534 (ἄλλο δὲ σείων / ἡμιτελὴς νέκυς ἦεν ἔχων αὐτόσσυτον ὁρμήν).

Birds: 186–187 (καὶ χορὸς ὀρνίθων ἑτερόχροος, ὧν τάχα φαίης / ἱπταμένων πτερύγων ἀνεμώδεα δοῦπον ἀκούειν), with parallels with descriptions of real ones: 6.387b–388 (συνιπταμένων δὲ θυέλλαις / ὀρνίθων πτερύγεσσιν ἐρετμώθη πάλιν ἀήρ, 18.259 ἵπτατο κυανέων πτερύγων ἑτερόζυγι παλμῷ), 22.41–42, 42.11.

44 See Yeroulanou (1999: 171–174, on dolphins; 177–188, on birds).

45 Compare QS *Posthom.* 5.97–98: at the end of his account of the shield of Achilles Quintus says that there were countless other scenes depicted on the shield which are not included in his description.

only two are described (177b–180); of the animals in the sea only a dolphin is mentioned (181–185); we are not told either how many birds there are. More generally, there is no information about how the animals represented on the different parts of the necklace relate to each other: do the serpent heads attack the eagle?, is the eagle rejecting an attack?, how does the eagle relate to the birds in the pendant?, are the fish in the sea (especially the dolphin) aware of the presence of the amphisbaena, the eagle and the chorus of birds?

The central concept of the *ekphrasis* is brilliance. Gold is enhanced with five white stones that are particularly bright[46] and two more adding colour (174–177: λυχνίδες, 178: γλαυκῆς δὲ λίθος χλοάουσα μαράγδου), so that the resulting piece can be called a ποικίλος ὅρμος (144, 151). The selenite, whose flow is linked to the phase of the moon (162b–166), and the ruby compared with a lamp (174b–177a) seem to be voluntarily shedding a steady flow of light. Similar strains of thought are developed for the pearl (167–169a), the agate (170: λεπτοφαὴς σέλας ὑγρὸν ἀπέπτυεν Ἰνδὸς ἀχάτης), and the joint action of the emerald and the crystal, compared with the two colours of the sea, in constant movement (178–180).

2 Harmonia's Necklace: Ekphrastic Strategies

Nonnus' contemporary learned readers confronted this *ekphrasis* with a visual and artistic baggage, and their rhetorical training modelled their response:[47] the educated reaction before a beautiful object was either to vie with it in words, with an *ekphrasis*,[48] or to appreciate this *ekphrasis* as an expression of culture and refinement. In this section I shall analyse the ekphrastic techniques at work in this passage and relate them to similar late antique instances.

I mentioned earlier that the *ekphrasis* of the necklace ends where it started, closing as a self-contained unit, with no time elapsed. The Ring Komposition movement emphasises the isolation of the object and the passage. This formal isolation was a regular feature in late antique *ekphraseis*,[49] and was regularly interpreted by the reader as a call to re-construct the elliptic *nexi*

46 5.162a: ξανθὸς ἴασπις, 162b–163: Σελήνης / … λίθον πάνλευκον, 167: μάργαρον … φαεσφόρον, 170: λεπτοφαὴς σέλας ὑγρὸν … Ἰνδὸς ἀχάτης, 179: κρύσταλλον … εἴκελον ἀφρῷ.

47 This reaction is what in Luc. *De domo* 2 makes the difference between the educated connoisseur, in love with beauty, and common men characterised by ἀγροικία δὲ πολλὴ καὶ ἀπειροκαλία καὶ προςέτιγε ἀμουσία.

48 Again Luc. *De domo*, to be read with Newby (2002).

49 Roberts (1989: 44): "the typical late antique passage … functions as a self-contained and self-defining oratory".

with the rest of the narrative. Ausonius makes this explicit in the first preface of his *Technopaenion* (Praef. 1):[50]

> *quae lecturus es monosyllaba sunt, quasi quaedam puncta sermonum ... set cohaerent ita, ut circuli catenarum separate ... tu facies, ut sint aliquid. Nam sine te monosyllaba erunt vel si quid minus*
>
> These verses you are about to read deal with monosyllables which serve, if I may put it in that way, as so many full-stops ... They merely hold together like the individual links in a chain ... You will endow them with a certain value. For without you they will be just monosyllables or, if possible, something still smaller.
>
> Text and transl. EVELYN WHITE 1919

Nonnus' readers, then, were expected to make sense of the *ekphrasis* of the necklace in its immediate context and in the broader frame of the poem.

A second strategy that strikes first-time readers of the *Dionysiaca* is how Nonnus enlivens the description comparing elements of the necklace with real-life counterparts.[51] This accumulation of reality effects makes the description more lively, though not necessarily more real or realistic, and recurs in the *D.* in all descriptions (e.g. descriptions of actions: 19.198–294 pantomime; 37.504–545 pugilism; 37.553–609 wrestling). Nonnus' usual strategy is to break the whole (be this an action, an object, a person) down into minute descriptions of every detail, each one enhanced with a reality effect, which regularly results in a visual nightmare for the non-initiated. He seems to aim for a broad visual impression (synaesthetic, if we take into account his regular appeals to other senses) rather than a clear image.[52]

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50 To be read with Miller (1998: 128). See also ibid. (116–119): in fourth century sarcophagi the parataxis of self-contained scenes requires that the viewer constructs narratives of theological meaning that arise from the juxtaposition of images.

51 Two comparisons with real life snakes (145–146: ὡς ὄφις ... οἷα γὰρ αὐτὴ / δίστομος ἀμφίσβαινα), further enhanced with vibration (148), kinetic sensation (151–153), undulating movement (157). The eagle seemed to be cutting the open air (159). Selenite compared to the moon and its phases (163–166), the ruby with a lamp (175–177), stones adorning the eagle compared to the sea in movement (178–180). Quasi-real presentation of the dolphin and birds (183–187), including non-visual sensations.

52 Zanker (1987: 50): "realism may only pretend to present what is real". Matthews (1989: 460), on Ammianus: "we are talking not only of factual reality but of a symbolic mode or representing it: or was it that in some cases factual reality had adopted a symbolic form?"

Attention to detail had always been a characteristic of *ekphraseis* as a means to achieve *enargeia*,[53] but in Late Antiquity there was a call to fill details with realism, to turn every detail into a reality effect, a choice that has been diversely labelled "exaggerated realism", "hyper-realism" and "pictorial theatricality".[54] Nugent (1990: 31–32) relates to this phenomenon the evocation of non-visual sensations (tactile, aural, kinetic, olfactory) that draws upon a kind of synaesthetic response in the reader, who must sense something that cannot strictly or literally be seen.

To this we can link the common ekphrastic strategy, also deployed by Nonnus here, of advertising that the description is only partial (see the end of the previous section) and calling readers to evoke what is not in the text.[55] The audience is called to supplement the text in the most appealing manner to their tastes and making the whole passage alive throughout.[56] This ambiguity also allows more space to find similarities with other passages in the poem.[57]

In this same direction go the constant emphasis of the "near-reality"[58] of the comparisons (the necklace is like a living snake)[59] and the straight references to the falseness of the described. Two passages are key to this regard:

156–157 καί οἱ ἑλισσομένης κεφαλὴ πολυδινέι παλμῷ
ψευδαλέον σύριγμα διήρυγεν ἀνθερεῶνος

and the head slid about with undulating movement / and belched a mimic hissing through the jaws

53 E.g. Nicolaus 68.19–20, 69.2–3. See Roberts (1989: 40–43).

54 Miller (1998: 128–129, 131); Nugent (1990: 30–37).

55 Miller (1998: 128–132).

56 Webb (1997: 242): "On pourrait s'attendre que les rhéteurs laissent les descriptions suffisamment ouvertes pour permettre à chacun de fournir les détails selon ses connaissances. C'est ainsi que les orateurs évitent le plus souvent l'accumulation de détails spécifiques".

57 Something similar happens with the initial *ekphrasis* in Ach. Tat. *L&C*: see Reeves (2007: 88–89).

58 Becker (1995: 27–28).

59 145–146: ὡς ὄφις … Οἷα γὰρ αὐτὴ / δίστομος ἀμφίσβαινα, 151: ὥς ὅ γε ποικίλος ὅρμος, 159: ἅτε πλατὺν ἠέρα τέμνων, 176–177: ὁμοίιον αἴθοπι λύχνῳ / ἁπτομένῳ, 179: δεξαμένη κρύσταλλον ὁμόζυγον εἴκελον ἀφρῷ, 183: οἷα περισκαίροντα, 186–187. See Becker (1995: 49–50), on simile and *ekphrasis*.

183b–185 πολὺς δέ τις ὑγρὸς ὁδίτης
μεσσοφανὴς ἐχόρευεν ἐπιξύων ἅλα δελφίς,
ψευδαλέην δ' ἐλέλιζεν ἑὴν αὐτόσσυτον οὐρήν

and many a supple traveller / danced half-seen, the dolphin skimming the brine / [185] and wagging its false tail self-moved

This comments on the deceptive nature of images both verbal and visual, and on the ontological instability of the ekphrasis and its object, caught between the poles of reality and illusion, statism and movement. Nonnus performs a gradual movement of detachment in his description of Harmonia's necklace: the amphisbaena is made concrete by the comparisons with real animals, and the eagle is between the two serpent heads, but from 174b (eyes made of rubies) the rest of the elements are not clearly located within the general frame. The description supersedes the physical and the plainly descriptive by both disregarding physical elements and focusing on what cannot be physically seen.[60]

In a similar way, when describing the river in his *Mosella* Ausonius starts with a description of the river-bed as clearly visible through the water surface (55–64), but then focuses on the false images reflected by the same water surface, depending on the incidence of the light at different times of the day (189–199, 222–239),[61] and notes the pleasure derived from the play between

60 Compare the description of Dionysus' shield (25.380–572): the ekphrasis alternates narratives that are linked to the images that adorn the shield, such as Amphion and Zethos building Thebes (415–428, with an emphasis on the naturalism and illusion of ekphrasis, esp. 419b–425—to be read with Agnosini 2010: 344, 346), the apotheosis of Ganymedes (429–450, with references to the physical nature of the described work: 433a οἷα καὶ ἐν γραφίδεσσι, 445b–446a ἕζετο δ' Ἥρη / οἷα χολωομένη καὶ ἐν ἀσπίδι—to be read with Agnosini 2010: 346–348) and Cronos deceived by Rhea after the birth of Zeus (553–562, to be read with Agnosini 2010: 350 "Il fatto che in chiusura sia posto proprio un mito di inganno è emblematico dell'importanza che Nonno attribuiva alla problematica della finzione"), with a narrative that emancipates from the ekphrasis, that of the death and resurrection of Tylos (451–552).

61 Falseness: 189 (*species*), 190 (*videntur*), 196 (*derisus navita*), 337 (*simulacra*), 228 (*simulamine*).

Reflection of the light on the water surface: 192–193: *quis color ille vadis, seras cum propulit umbras / Hesperus et viridi perfundit monte Mosellam!* ("What a hue is on the waters when Hesperus has driven forward the lagging shadows and overspreads Moselle with the green of the reflected height"), 222–224: *hos Hyperionio cum sol perfuderit aestu,*

real and illusory images.[62] The illusions reflected by the water are as unreliable as his own techniques of representation,[63] and the dissolution of the plastic image can be read, both in Ausonius and in Nonnus, as a means to value the knowing eyes of the savvy reader faced with an impossible verbal picture and the self-sufficiency of the illusionistic poetic text over a physical image and reality itself.[64]

Similarly, when Lucian describes the set of paintings decorating the hall in his *De domo*, he starts with a detailed description of the first image (Perseus and Andromeda, § 22). Some detail is also given to the second (Orestes and Pylades killing Aegisthus, § 23), whereas subject matters are identified in the next few (§ § 24–31), but the precise features are passed over and the speaker seems more interested in showing the links between them. Newby (2002: 132–133) suggests that this is a strategy to rid the audience of their wonder before the (visual) beauty of the hall and to impose on them an intellectualised discourse on the image, so that words dominate the visual and the intellects. In other words, a real image may seduce and absorb the viewer, but both Lucian's and Nonnus' descriptions seek to surpass the power of the image by challenging the reader to a combined intellectual and visual comprehension, which is ultimately impossible because the image does not exist.

Nonnus' focus on detail and brilliance implies that his reader strives to integrate the individual details into the whole of the composition. This strain of the eye is dramatised in Procopius' reflection on the beholder of St Sophia (a real object) (*De Aed.* 1.1.47–49):

/ reddit nautales vitreo sub gurgite formas / et redigit pandas inversi corporis umbras ("But when Hyperion pours down the sun's full heat, the crystal flood reflects sailor-shapes and throws back crooked picture of their downward forms").

62 228–229: *ipsa suo gaudet simulamine nautical pubes, / fallaces fluvio mirata redire figuras* ("The boys themselves delight in their own counterfeits, wondering at the illusive forms which the river gives back"), 238–239: *talis ad umbrarum ludibria nautical pubes / ambiguis fuitur very falsique figuris* ("even so, at the sight of the reflections which mock them, the lads afloat amuse themselves with shapes which waver between false and true").

63 Nugent (1990: 32, 34); Miller (1998: 129).

64 On Ausonius, see Mattiacci (2013: 217, 223). On Nonnus, Agnosini (2010: 351), concludes: "l'episodio di Ganimede e l'epillio di Tilo hanno messo a confronto arte e poesia nella rappresentazione dei sentimenti sfruttando la possibilità poetica della trasformazione della descrizione in narrazione, per finire con la fondamentale antitesi che è poi la dialettica della mimesi: l'eterno conflitto tra realtà e illusione. Una mimesi dunque illusionistica … per eccesso di potenzialità raffigurativa e verisimiglianza, di andare oltre il vero".

> All these details, fitted together with incredible skill in mid-air and floating off from each other and resting only on the parts next to them, produce a single and most extraordinary harmony in the work and yet do not permit the spectator to linger much over the study of any one of them, but each detail attracts the eye and draws it irresistibly to itself. So the vision constantly shifts suddenly, for the beholder is utterly unable to select which particular detail he should admire more than all the others. But even so, though they turn their attention to every side and look with contracted brows upon every detail, observers are still unable to understand the skilful craftsmanship, but they always depart from there overwhelmed by the bewildering sight.[65]

Analysing this passage, Kiilerich (2012: 22–24) notes that there are two manners of viewing an artwork: the initial viewing or global impression is followed by more directed viewing or focal attention. According to Procopius, late antique spectators of St Sophia failed in focal attention, bound to remain dispersed, and thus they eschewed the concrete details, to linger in an immaterial experience.[66]

The conflict between the whole and the detail in Nonnus' description testifies in late antique standards to the quality of the described object and of the author of the description, capable of rendering this virtue. Late antique readers (and viewers) were used to analysing self-contained units, whose colourful elements interacted with each other vying for attention.[67] Hence the appreciation of descriptions of gold and gems[68] and the tendency towards exhaustiveness, the crowded effect, seeking an eye expert in rhetorical patterns to exact meaning and aesthetic pleasure of what the layman perceives as a colourful confusion.

Along this line of argumentation, the rich materials employed both in Harmonia's necklace and in St Sophia (the emperor ordered to bring materials from the four corners of the world to build the church), are the springboard for rhetorical and aesthetic elaboration, not an end in themselves. Emphasis on the pecuniary value of the necklace would have made Harmonia and Cadmus look like barbaric *nouveaux riches*,[69] incapable of seeing

65 Translation from Dewing (1940). To be read with Roberts (1989: 74–75); Elsner (2004: 308–309).

66 Kiilerich (2012: 23–24).

67 Roberts (1989: 64–65).

68 Roberts (1989: 53–55).

69 Compare Lucian *De domo* 5: "the Great King's plane tree ... was wonderful only on account

beyond the details. Nonnus' (and Ausonius') *ekphrasis* thus settles for an artistic definition of paideia.

It is now popular to interpret the mythological scenes displayed on different domestic spaces (mosaics, paintings, tableware) as statements of paideia. Members of the upper classes carefully selected how they wanted to appear before their guests and used mythological images to prove that they were part of the elite united by a common educational training and a shared idea of culture.[70] They certainly were, and Nonnus plays on this in his description of the shield of Dionysus (25.384–567), placed under the aegis of the Homeric shield of Achilles.[71] The *ekphrasis* of Harmonia's necklace, not adorned with mythological scenes, denotes a more subtle conception of paideia, based on aesthetic (and rhetorical) display and fruition, not confined to a mythical narrative, even if the object imagined plays a role in a mythical account.

The connoisseur reader of the *ekphrasis* of Harmonia's necklace is expected to go beyond the simple enjoyment of mythical narratives that form the base of paideia to be seduced by an artistic celebration of anything beautiful. When the described object displays a (mythical) narrative, this offers an appropriate starting point for the discourse (as is the case in e.g. Philostratus' *Imagines*, constantly drawing on literary sources), whereas non-narrative objects are more challenging for both the speaker and his audience. In the absence of a narrative frame the discourse cannot be derived from a literary (contextualising) narrative as a means for concretion,[72] and will therefore be more abstract (thus more difficult to enact and apprehend).

of its cost; there was no craftsmanship or beauty or charm or symmetry or grace wrought into the gold or combined with it. The thing was barbarous, nothing but money, a source of envy to those who saw it, and of felicitation to those who owned it. There was nothing praiseworthy about it. The Arsacids neither cared for beauty nor aimed at attractiveness in making their display nor minded whether the spectators praised or not, as long as they were astounded. The barbarians are not beauty-lovers; they are money-lovers" (translation from Harmon [1913], to be read with Newby [(2002: 129)]). Also, Heliod. 5.13–15, Calasiris rewards Nausicles (a down-to-earth merchant) for rescuing Chariclea with a ring inset with an Ethiopian amethyst, which Nausicles estimates to be worth as much as all he possesses (5.15.1), in contrast with the artistic appreciation of the jewel promoted by the novelist with his previous *ekphrasis* of the piece.

70 Particularly commendable: Leader-Newby (2004).

71 See Hopkinson (1994: 22–24); Vian (1990: 33–42).

72 Compare Elsner (1995: 21–22) on the *Imagines* of Philostratus and the *Tabula* of Cebes.

3 *Ekphrasis* and Narrative

We have seen that the *ekphrasis* of Harmonia's necklace did not emerge from Nonnus' quill in a cultural and textual vacuum: it could be related by his readers to real life jewellery, the literary tradition of descriptions of beautiful objects crafted by Hephaestus and contemporary rhetorical trends of description. In the context of the latter, readers were called to make sense of the passage in the narrative in which it was inset, which, I shall try to show, in this case meant (1) a metonymic use of the necklace for its bearer, and (2) the *ekphrasis* as a narrative node or launching platform of narrative threads.

3.1 *The Necklace as a Metonym of Its Bearer, Harmonia*

Ancient rhetors mention amongst the possible characterisation techniques metonymy,[73] by which one of the distinctive features of a person, e.g. physical appearance, is used as an indicator of his/her character. In this case, I would like to argue, the beauty of the necklace not only enhances Harmonia's beauty, but acts as a foil or metonym for it.[74] The introduction and conclusion of the *ekphrasis* insist that despite the gold and gems, the necklace looks pale when compared with Harmonia's beauty (134–135, 189).[75] The description works as an implied or truncated priamel:[76] each reference to the gold and gems, and to the animals so well wrought that they look real, serves as a foil for the point of interest (Harmonia's beauty), the accumulation of them building an *in crescendo* movement. At the same time, the elaboration on the beauty of the jewel is a foil for the lack of physical description of the bride, matching up Menander Rhetor's advice to the author of an epithalamium to avoid giving too much physical information about a bride, which could give the wrong impression that he is interested in her.[77]

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73 De Temmerman (2014: 30–31,35–41).

74 Compare *Od.* 19.226–231 Odysseus' brooch, adorned with a dog grasping a fawn, an anticipation of the predatory slaying of the suitors and representation of Odysseus' general intentions at the time of the description—see Harrison (2001: 74–75). Also in Heliod. *Aethiop.* 3.4, Chariclea wears in her first appearance at the procession in Delphi an extraordinary breast band, intricately adorned with two serpents, which do not inspire fright, but are lulled by the sensuous warmth of Charicleia's bosom: the potential disruption of the serpents (Chariclea's sensual power) is restrained by her virtue.

75 The same motif recurs in 42.422–426: βολαῖς δ' ἀντίρροπος Ἠοῦς / εἴκελος ἠλέκτρῳ Βερόης ἀμαρύσσεται αὐχήν / καὶ λίθον ἀστράπτοντα ("The neck of Beroe / is like the gleams of Dawn, it shines like amber, / [outshines] a sparkling jewel").

76 Definitions of priamel: Bundy (1986: esp. 4–10); Race (1982: 7–17).

77 Men. Rh. 404.11–14: "As for the girl, be cautious in describing her beauty because of

Further on, the necklace contributes to the characterisation of Harmonia for its link to the crown Hephaestus made for Pandora, described by Hesiod, and from which Nonnus picks up elements of the phrasing and decoration.[78] Pandora is a common enterprise of the gods, who array her in all finery, each of them giving something out to make her an attractive bride, an invincible weapon complete to the last detail (Hes. *Th.* 585–589), to punish the race of men. Harmonia is also bedecked by all the gods, but in gratitude to Cadmus for helping to save them from Typhoeus. Pandora's diadem was part of the deception of others, whereas Harmonia's necklace is part of her own deception: she was aware that nothing good could come from marrying a vagrant with no means of giving her a comfortable existence (Nonn. *D.* 4.36–63), but Aphrodite deluded her into falling in love with Cadmus (4.67–178) and the necklace makes her believe that hers is an advantageous marriage.

Finally, the description of Harmonia at her wedding as a heavily bejewelled woman brings in contemporary connotations. In Nonnus' own time, gold and silver jewellery were still common in dowries,[79] and a woman's jewellery was a means to display the husband's wealth in public.[80] The best-known heavily adorned woman was the empress,[81] whose image was endlessly replicated and circulated widely on coins.[82] From an iconographic point of view, empresses,

the scandal that may be caused, unless you are a relation and can speak as one who cannot help knowing, or unless you can remove the objection by saying 'I have heard …'". Translation from Russell and Wilson (1981).

78 Nonn. 5.181a: Τῷ ἔνι δαίδαλα πολλὰ τετεύχατο ~ Hes. *Th.* 581a: τῇ δ' ἔνι δαίδαλα πολλὰ τετεύχατο; Nonn. 5.182: ἀλίτροφα πώεα λίμνης ~ Hes. *Th.* 582: κνώδαλ' ὅσ' ἤπειρος δεινὰ τρέφει ἠδὲ θάλασσα; Nonn. 5.186b–187: ὧν τάχα φαίης / ἱπταμένων πτερύγων ἀνεμώδεα δοῦπον ἀκούειν ~ Hes. *Th.* 584: ζωοῖσιν ἐοικότα φωνήεσσιν.

79 Krause (1994–1995: II, 256–263).

80 E.g. necklaces in female busts in fourth century AD sarcophagi: Birk (2013: 141–142, and cat. nos 11, 23, 431–433).

81 Roughly contemporary with Nonnus: Eudoxia, wife of Arcadius, Augusta 400–404 (Grierson and Mays 1992: 133–135, cat. nos. 273–294); Pulcheria, sister of Theodosius II, Augusta 414–453 (Grierson and Mays 1992: 152–154, cat. nos. 436–453); Eudocia, wife of Theodosius II, Augusta 423–460 (Grierson and Mays 1992: 155–156, cat. nos. 454–475); Verina, wife of Leo I, Augusta 457–484 (Grierson and Mays 1992: 170–171, cat. nos. 593–598); Ariadne, wife first of Zeno and then of Anastasius, Augusta 474(?)–515 (Grierson and Mays 1992:176, cat. nos. 606); Licinia Eudoxia, wife of Valentinian III, Augusta 439–490 (Grierson and Mays 1992: 244–246, cat. nos. 395, 870–873).

82 See also steelyard weights in the shape of the bust of an empress, with jewelled diadem, single-row necklace and *pendilia* hanging from the headdress. For a full study, see McClanan (2002).

FIGURE 9.5 *Solidus of Valentinian III, minted in Ravenna, 439–455, now at the British Museum (reg. no. 1860,0329.228) (Kent 1994: RIC 10.2023)*
© TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

like emperors, had no personal identity: theirs was the image of a female member of the imperial house who embodied state authority.[83] In the fifth century AD, the representation of women of the Imperial household was particularly elaborate.[84] Take, for instance, a golden solidus representing Licinia Eudoxia (fig. 9.5). On the obverse, her bust is draped and cuirassed, adorned with a jewelled brooch with three pendants on her right shoulder. She is wearing a three-row necklace, pearl earrings and an elaborate crown adorned with pinnacles and a central cross, with long *pendilia* hanging to the level of her shoulders. On the reverse she is represented seated on a throne, carrying a globe, holding a cross in her right hand and a longer one in her left hand. She is wearing a crown with long *pendilia*, a single-row necklace and, under her breast, a circular brooch held in place by a two-side strand. The individual disappears under the weight of the jewellery with which she represents the wealth of the State.

The representation of the empress can be related to the ancient perception of how jewellery affected a woman's image. In Lucian's *De domo*, the first speaker (§ 7) considers that a beautiful woman should use only delicate and limited jewellery to enhance her beauty, because only unattractive courtesans cover themselves in gold and purple to conceal their lack of beauty. According

83 McClanan (2002: 1–5).
84 On the evolution of the diadem, see Stout (1994: esp. 93–96). Overall see Kent (1994: 52–54: RIC 10).

to the second speaker (§ 15), abundant jewellery distracts viewers, who focus their eyes only on gold and gems instead of the woman's beauty. Thus an excess of adornment is detrimental for women who want to be appreciated for themselves, and can be used as a means of concealment.

Both parameters can be applied to Harmonia. Before getting married we hear her speaking up against an unwelcome marriage (4.20–66), but once she wears the jewellery given at her wedding by the gods—Hephaestus crown, Hera's throne and Aphrodite's necklace give her an imperial appearance—she becomes a mute icon: her divine ascendance contributes to the splendour of the future Theban royal family (and their heir, Dionysus), but her words are no longer required. The jewellery can also be said to conceal Harmonia from indiscreet looks and to obviate the need for further developing her character beyond the narrative of her wedding.

3.2 *The* ekphrasis *as a Narrative Node*

As demonstrated by Roberts (1989 *passim*) and Miller (1998), late antique art and literature have in common the construction of a narrative out of formally disconnected fragments which demand the intervention of the viewer and reader to supply the elliptic nexi and re-construct the underlining thread(s) of thought. This mode of narration is more challenging for the reader and viewer and tends to be non-lineal: e.g. the episodes decorating a fourth century sarcophagus illustrate one or more theological concepts (Christ as teacher, Christ as saviour) and at the same time engage individually in games of parallelism and opposition with each other and with other Bible episodes not represented in the sarcophagus. In the case of descriptive text units this urge to interpret was further encouraged by the frequent deployment of *ekphrasis* as a proleptic device.[85] This means that Nonnus' *ekphrasis* of the necklace would have been expected to be connected with the rest of the poem, taking part in more than one narrative thread.

For instance, we can interpret this *ekphrasis* as part of an iterative narrative: the use of the necklace in the past determines its use in the present.[86] Thus,

85 What follows is based on Harrison (2001). See also Frangoulis (2013), on the proleptic functions of Nonnus' *ekphraseis* of Europa (*D.* 1.46–137) and Tereus, Philomela and Procne (*D.* 4.319–330).

86 On retrospective or analeptic *ekphrasis*, see Harrison (2001: 75–76, baldric of Heracles in *Od.* 11.609–612; 84, on Moschus *Europa* 43–62; 90–91, on Verg. *Aen.* 10.495–505, both analeptic and proleptic; 92, n. 47, Valerius Flaccus *Arg.* 5.433–455, operating both analeptically and proleptically). The most complete case of iterative *ekphrasis* in Nonn. *D.* is that of Hera's toilet (32.10–37), a quasi ritual repetition of her preparation for her first (successful)

the necklace is given to Harmonia, with Cadmus standing alongside, but the focus of the scene falls on her mother Aphrodite (135–137, 188–189), so that the description reflects what Aphrodite sees and thinks at the moment:[87] for her the necklace is an exquisite jewel, which Hephaestus gave her out of happiness for the birth of a healthy child (5.138–144), and she bequeaths it to her daughter as a token of fertility.

The erotic elements of the description seep into the context: Aphrodite, the goddess of love, the one giving the necklace away as a present in an erotic context, that of a wedding (135b–137), the vocabulary of interlacing (in particular the interlacing of the serpents in 148–150, 152–153)[88] and gleam (162–170, 174b–180). Note especially the conclusion of the section:

5.190–192a καὶ γαμίων ζευχθεῖσα πόθων ἰθύντορι κεστῷ
Ἁρμονίη πολύπαιδα γονὴν μαιώσατο κόλπῳ
τικτομένην κατὰ βαιόν

> Soon Harmonia yoked by the cestus-girdle that guides wedded desire, / carried in her womb the seed of many children / whom she brought forth one by one.

Harmonia is presented under the influence not of the necklace (188: ὅρμον) but of the girdle (190: κεστῷ), described as director of the passions related to marriage (γαμίων ... πόθωνἰθύντορι), Aphrodite's most characteristic attribute,

encounter with Zeus (in lines 32–35 she wears the same robe she wore on that occasion), wishing to achieve the same result in the present narrative, and at the same time mirroring her preparation to deceive Zeus in the *Iliad* (*Il.* 14.153–360, 15.1–77—on Nonnus' adaptation of the Homeric episode, s. Hopkinson [1994: 31–32]). The Iliadic description is textually a flash-back of the *D.*, but chronologically a flash-forward, since Dionysus' war against the Indians precedes the Trojan war.

87 Harrison (2001: 71): "If a description within a narrative signifies future events, it is likely to do so from a particular point of view, focalized by a particular character. The characters of the narrative, unless they themselves have gifts of foresight or of prophetic interpretation, will naturally be unable to recognize the significance of the proleptic ekphrasis in predicting the future course of the narrative, and the resulting gap of knowledge between the non-omniscient character and the omniscient (second-time) reader, is frequently a source of dramatic irony and pathos".

88 The same strategy is employed in the description of Electra's garden: Nonn. *D.* 3.142b–163.

the site of her power,[89] which she lends to other women.[90] This explains why the description is followed without explanatory nexi by the account of Harmonia's subsequent pregnancies (191–192a).

At the same time, the object described has negative connotations that are not explicit in the text, but could be reconstructed by Nonnus' readers. To start with, Aphrodite's choice of gift is slightly strange: it was made by Hephaestus for her after the birth of their son Eros, and now she gives it to the daughter she had with Ares out of wedlock. Hephaestus could be seen creating the necklace as a deferred punishment for his unfaithful wife and Aphrodite giving it to her adulterine daughter, unawares of the additional meanings it could convey.[91] This is what happens in Statius *Theb.* 2.269–305: Vulcanus creates the necklace as an ominous wedding gift for Harmonia, and through it he punishes her mother Venus for her adultery with Mars. It has been suggested that Statius had before him an elaborate description of the necklace (by Callimachus?), which he summarised,[92] and could have been available to Nonnus, but in any case the serpentine necklace is part of a tradition of serpent-related destructive gadgets.

In early epic, serpents adorned weapons, such as Agamemnon's cuirass (*Il.* 11.19–28) and a shoulder belt sporting a three-headed serpent (11.38–40), designed to inspire terror on the enemies.[93] The serpentine girdle of the Gor-

89 See esp. 4.67–68: ἀλλὰ περισφίγξασα δέμας φρενοθελγέι κεστῷ, / κερδαλέῳ ζωστῆρι, δολοφράδμων Ἀφροδίτη ("But now [before confronting Harmonia] tricky-minded Aphrodite girt her body in the heart-bewitching cestus-belt") and 177–178: Ἁρμονίην φυγοδέμνιον ἤλασε κεστῷ / εἰς πόθον οἰστρήσασα δόλῳ πειθήμονα κούρην ("and with her girdle drove bedshy Harmonia / to her voyage, stung as with a gadfly and now obedient to desire"), and more generally: 8.175: Παφίης φρενοθελγέα κεστόν; 15.210–212; 24.245, 297, 317–318; 31.201: κεστὸν … πόθου θελξίφρονα μίτρην, 273: κεστὸν ἱμάντα, τεὴν πανθέλγεα μίτρην; 32.4–8; 36.59–61a; 42.369–370a, 379; 47.276b–277; 48.690b–692.

90 31.199–32.8 (Aphrodite lends the cestus to Hera who wants to charm Zeus), with the description of its effect (32.38–40) and how Zeus recognises its influx on him (32.63–64). Apate (Deceit) keeps a similar girdle she lends to Hera to deceive Semele (8.109–177; description of the girdle in 121–123).

91 A parallel for this is the treatment of Jason's cloak in Apollonius Rhodius: the women of Lemnos admire the beauty of Jason's clothes (1.774–186), unawares that they do not only enhance his appearance but also advertise his destructiveness. See Harrison (2001: 81–83).

92 Vessey (1973: 138–139). In Verg. *Aen.* 7.341–358 the Gorgon Allecto poisons Amata by throwing at her one of her snakes, which glides around her limbs and becomes a golden necklace around her neck.

93 Harrison (2001: 73) notes that Agamemnon's armour represents his character and intentions.

gons emblazoned on the shield of Heracles ([Hes.] *Sc.* 233–236) has a similar function. In Euripides' *Ion* (1412–1436), Ion's birth tokens include her mother's first weaving adorned with a gorgon edged with snakes, a golden necklace decorated with two snakes[94] and an olive garland. These tokens counteract the earlier reference to Erichthonius' golden bracelet keeping two drops of Gorgon's blood (one for healing, one for killing) with which Creusa plans to poison Ion (999–1038).

To add to this, the description of the necklace is unusual in not reflecting on the sinister overtones of the serpents and in presenting them in harmony with an eagle, when their encounter is usually presented as a fight. Natural history treatises put their traditional enmity down to practical terms (eagles eat snakes),[95] and their fight is a confrontation between the forces of light and air (the eagle as Zeus' bird) and chthonic powers, represented by the snake. As such, eagle and snake feature from an early date in mantic texts, starting with the Iliadic portent of an eagle dropping a serpent on the Trojan army to predict the lack of success of their initiative (*Il.* 12.200–210).[96]

The image had a long tradition in Greek art and Christian contexts.[97] Both pagan and Christian images are designed to reflect on the fight of evil and good and an optimistic outcome (the eagle is presented defeating the snake).[98] For instance, in a sarcophagus of San Lorenzo fuori le Mura (fig. 9.6), decorated with vintaging Erotes as a Bacchic celebration of life after death, this motif features on one of the corners of the laterals. In the fifth-sixth century mosaic of the Imperial palace in Constantinople (fig. 9.7), it appears in conjunction with a deer killing a snake and a griffin eating a lizard, all of them interpreted as allegories of the struggle between good and evil, light and darkness, Christ and Satan.[99]

94 After the Athenian custom, in memory of Erichthonius: Eur. *Ion* 24–26.

95 Arist. *HA* 609a; Aelian, *NA* 2.26; Fable 395 Perry (Aphthonius 28).

96 In S. *Ant.* 110–126 the fight of eagle and snake is a simile for the fighting armies. Aristophanes' parody (*Eq.* 197–198) of an omen with a serpent and an eagle attests to its popularity in predictions.

97 Overview in Wittkower (1977: 26–35).

98 The motif was attributed healing powers: *Kyranides* 1.9.12–16 (a jasper engraved with the image of a kite biting a snake improves the digestion of the bearer). An example of this is a jasper gem from the Hermitage, St Petersburg (Inv. no. Ж.6673), for which see Nagy (2011: 76).

99 Trilling (1989: 59). In the context of the mosaic they represent the natural dangers disturbing an essentially idyllic rural life, connecting agricultural and political issues: Trilling (1989: 62 f.).

FIGURE 9.6 *Dionysiac sarcophagus, made in Athens (third century* AD*), now San Lorenzo fuori le Mura (Rome)*
© EKATERINA AVERINA

FIGURE 9.7 *Eagle and snake, fifth-sixth* AD*, mosaic flooring Constantinople, Imperial Palace*
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What these images have in common with the decoration of the necklace is revealed by two passages featuring the eagle and the snake: the omen sent to Dionysus at a moment of stalemate of the war (38.26–29) and the foundation myth of Tyre (40.469–500).[100]

The founders of Tyre are requested to reach the place of the ambrosial rocks, where they will find an olive tree on fire and an eagle, a bowl and a serpent on its branches (40.467–477). The sight is unnatural because the fire does not consume the wood, the eagle and the snake do not attack each other and the bowl is not destabilised by the gusts of wind (478–492).[101] The future Tyrians must catch the eagle and sacrifice it to Poseidon to fix the ambrosial rocks at the bottom of the sea, and found Tyre at the site (493–500). All elements play a role in the narrative with the exception of the serpent:[102] the ambrosial rocks become the ground on which the city is built, the olive tree represents Athena and the fire is Hephaestus (the two patrons of the new foundation), the eagle is used for the sacrifice and the cup for the libation. The serpent is introduced to emphasise the strangeness of the phenomenon, and at the same time highlights the oddity of the decoration of the necklace.

Regarding the omens at the end of the war, Dionysus and his army witness two prodigies sent by Zeus: a solar eclipse (38.15–25) and an eagle dropping a serpent in the river Hydaspes (38.26–30). The soothsayer Idmon (46–72) interprets the second omen as a sign of their future victory over the Indians, with Deriades being swallowed in the river like the snake. Dionysus takes the shape of the eagle like his father Zeus. Hermes then reads the eclipse as a sign of Dionysus' victory (75–102): light-bringing Bacchus will defeat the dark Indians, just as the sun defeats the shadows. The two omens are complementary and add up to the double equivalence of Indians/darkness and Dionysus/light pervasive in the narrative of the war.[103]

Read from the end of the poem, Harmonia's necklace is an emblem of the fight of her grandson Dionysus against the Indians. The eagle of the *ekphrasis* does not attack the serpent and the serpent of the omen gets loose from the eagle's grip and sinks in the river, just as Dionysus will avoid being harsh on the Indians, dark and impious though they are: he defeats them with wine (14.411–

100 More vaguely related: *D.* 25.4–10 omen of the snake that eats several chicks and their mother as a prediction of the end of the war (after Hom. *Il.* 2.308 ff.).

101 Grotanelli (1972: 56–58) and Accorinti (2004: n. to 40.478–491) suggest that the eagle and the serpent coexist peacefully because they symbolise the complementarity of the earth and the sky. See also Gigli-Piccardi (2003: 402–403, n. to 5.171–174).

102 Simon (1999: 153–155).

103 Overview: Gerlaud (2005:238–243); Frangoulis (2009).

15.168), Orontes commits suicide (17.262–289), Morrheus is tamed by a woman (35.98–222), Deriades drowns in the waters of the Hydaspes (40.82–95).

However, the *ekphrasis* describes an eagle and a two-headed amphisbaena, not a simple snake. This could represent Cadmus and Harmonia, who become serpents, joined by a common destiny.[104] This happens beyond the chronological boundaries of the narrative, but the episode is anticipated several times in the poem.[105] Right before the description of the necklace, Cadmus and Harmonia enter their nuptial chamber under the constellation Draco (5.121–125) and references come back at the end of the poem: when Agaue tries to avert the ill omina about her son with a sacrifice, two serpents creep around Cadmus and Harmonia, a presage of their future shape (44.107–118); after the death of Pentheus, as the whole family mourns, the narrator refers again to the future metamorphosis of the couple (46.364–367).

The two serpent heads hold the eagle,[106] just as the union of Cadmus and Harmonia holds the future of Dionysus, son of Zeus and whose symbol in the poem is sometimes an eagle.[107] The necklace is a reminder that the marriage of Cadmus and Harmonia makes the birth of Dionysus possible and as such it can

104 Compare the description of the metamorphosed couple into two intertwined snakes in Ovid *Met.* 4.600–601 and Stat. *Theb.* 4.553–555. See Gigli Piccardi (2003: 270). See also Nonn. *D.* 48.458b–463a (serpents as a prediction and cause of madness): ὑψινόου δὲ / αὐχένα δειλαίης ὀφιώδεϊ τύψεν ἱμάσθλῃ, / καί μιν ἀνεστυφέλιξε δίκης τροχοειδέι κύκλῳ, / καὶ νόον ἄφρονα κάμψεν ἀκαμπέος· ἀμφὶ δὲ μίτρην / παρθενικῆς ἐλέλιζεν ἐχιδνήεσσαν ἱμάσθλην / Ἀργολὶς Ἀδρήστεια ("She [Nemesis] flicked / the proud neck of the hapless girl [Aura] with her snaky whip / and struck her with the round wheel of justice, / and bent the foolish neck of unbending will. Argive Adrastea / let the whip with its vipers curl round / the maiden's girdle").

105 In the initial collaboration of Cadmus with Zeus to defeat Typhoeus, Zeus warns Cadmus against offending Ares killing the Dircaian serpent and advises him to appease him with two common remedies for serpent bites (2.669–678)—to be read with Gigli Piccardi (2003: 254, n. to 672–676). Later, when Cadmus is about to sacrifice the cow that leads him to the future site of Thebes, the serpent kills several of his companions and then curls around him (4.356–388). Only when Athena gives him instructions to attack the animal (4.389–408a), does he kill it (409a–416a), thus bringing onto himself Ares' anger and his deferred transformation into a serpent (417–420). On extradiegetic prolepsis, see Harrison (2001: 85).

106 Compare Philostr. *Imagines* 1.18.4 Cadmus and Harmonia are described being transformed into serpents, embracing each other, as though holding to what is left of their human bodies.

107 Omen foretelling the result of the Indian war: 38.26–28, 61–69. Eacus asks for a similar prophecy, interpreting the eagle as a symbol of Zeus both as his father and Dionysus' (39.153–164a).

be treated as a jewelled encomium of the new couple's future achievements. Further on, just as the necklace was designed to celebrate the birth of a son (Eros) who was unlike his father (138–145), it could celebrate here that the grandson was unlike his mortal grandparents.

Two of the gems adorning the necklace, the pearl and the agate (167–170), are related to India, and could prefigure the treasures of India, a plentiful booty for Dionysus and his troops at the end of the Indian expedition (40.255–257, 266–268, 277–279).[108] Along these lines, the image of the sea would predict the final naval battle, in which Dionysus defeats Deriades.[109] The dolphin is the most popular fish of the *Dionysiaca*, featuring as a carrier of marine deities (1.72–79, 6.296–297, 13.435–443, 43.281–285) and the final shape of the Tyrsenian pirates (44.245–249, 45.165–168, 47.629–632—in this episode the dolphin becomes a Dionysiac animal).[110] In the final battle, Deriades fails in his attack against Dionysus and hits a dolphin instead (39.335–338). The colourful birds flying over the sea (5.186: χορὸς ὀρνίθων ἑτερόχροος) would prepare us for the exotic birds of India (40.279: ὄρνεά τ' αἰολόμορφα), in particular the orion and catreus, described in the paradoxographical catalogue of Indian curiosities (26.201–211).

A more general interpretation of the decoration is possible. The sophisticated reader may choose to interpret *ekphrasis* and necklace as representations of the cosmos,[111] in the wake of the interpretation of the Homeric *ekphrasis* of Achilles' shield (*Il.* 18) as an image of the cosmos, which Nonnus replicates and subverts elsewhere.[112] Particularly significant to this regard would be lines 158–161: the cosmos could be said to have a round (snake-like) shape[113] in which the beginning and the end are one and the same thing (158: ὅπῃ τέλος ἐστὶ καὶ ἀρχή). The interpretation would be further reinforced by the frequent connection of Aion ("eternal, cyclical Time") and the serpent: in Nonnus' poems Aion is usually referred to as having circular shape[114] and only once compared to a

108 On India as a country of precious stones, see Karttunen (1997: 233–252).

109 Nonn. *D.* 39.123–40.95.

110 Dolphins are supposed to retain part of their former human intelligence (e.g. Opp. *H.* 1.649–653). Nonnus reflects this notion when referring to the dolphin (13.442: ἔμφρονα θυμὸν ἔχων), and reverses it in the story of the pirates (44.245–247).

111 For a cosmic reading, see Gigli Piccardi (2003: 398, n. to 144 sg.; 402–403, n. to 171–174).

112 In his descriptions of the shield of Dionysus (25.384–567: the earth and the sea at the centre of the shield, surrounded by the sky and constellations) and Harmonia's weaving (41.294–302: the earth and the sea at the centre, then come concentrically the sky and constellations and the Ocean on the outer rim). The *chiton* of Heracles is also a cosmic image (40.416).

113 Also the constellation of the serpent, i.e. the Milky Way, on Dionysus' shield (25.402–409).

114 Nonn. *P.* 3.78–79, 6.146–147, 8.93–94, 8.155–157, 10.101–102, 12.198–199, 13.37–38; *D.* 3.254–

snake,[115] but the snake is one of the regular attributes of Aion in visual representations of the type called Aion-Chronos.[116] Furthermore, the pendant is decorated with an eagle, the symbol of Zeus, hanging in the air (159: ἅτε πλατὺν ἠέρα τέμνων, 161: ὑψιφανής),[117] attached to the cosmos by the four elements (161: τετράζυγι κημῷ), which feature in other cosmic passages of the *Dionysiaca*.[118]

The phrasing could also support a Christian reading of the motif. Line 158 (ὅπῃ τέλος ἐστὶ καὶ ἀρχή) is similar to the definition of God as the beginning and the end, often found together with the image of Alpha and Omega.[119] Christian parallels can be invoked for the combination of the eagle with Alpha and Omega, as a Christological image.[120] In a Christian context the snake often represents evil and the devil, and the fight of the eagle and the snake can be a symbol of Christ defeating evil (see figure 9.7).[121] Of course, the *ekphrasis* does

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255, 26.422–423. More generally on Aion: *D.* 6.371–372, 7.9–10, 7.22–75, 12.25, 24.265b–267, 40.430–434, 41.83–84; *P.* 6.178–179, 9.8–9.

115 *D.* 41.178–182: χερσὶ δὲ γηραλέῃσιν ἐς ἀρτιτόκου χρόα κούρης / σπάργανα πέπλα Δίκης ἀνεκούφισε σύντροφος Αἰών, / μάντις ἐπεσσομένων, ὅτι γήραος ἄχθος ἀμείβων, / ὡς ὄφις ἀδρανέων φολίδων σπείρημα τινάξας, / ἔμπαλιν ἡβήσειε λελουμένος οἴδμασι θεσμῶν ("Time, his coeval, with his aged hands swaddled / about the newborn girl's body the robes of Justice, / prophet of things to come; because he would put off the burden of age, / like a snake throwing off the rope-like slough of his feeble old scales, / and grow young again bathed in the waves of Law").

116 Le Glay (1981: nos 17, 20, 21, 30, 35–41 and comm. in pages 410–411).

117 Note *Il.* 12.201 = 219 αἰετός ὑψιπέτης.

118 6.99 (~ 12.169): τετράζυγι κόσμῳ, 7.6: τετράζυγι δεσμῷ, 41.54: ἀτόμων τετράζυγι δεσμῷ.

119 Esp. *Rev.* 21:6: ἐγώ [εἰμι] τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὦ, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος; 22:13: ἐγὼ τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὦ, ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, ἡ ἀρχὴκαὶ τὸ τέλος.

120 A rampant eagle with the A and Ω features in a medallion on a mosaic of the Church of Deacon Thomas in Mount Nebo (Jordan), dated to 540s/550s AD: Piccirillo (1989: 222–223); Talgam (2014: 201–202). There is a numerous group of Coptic funerary stelae from the Thebaid (esp. Armant/Hermonthis and Esna/Letopolis) with a bird sometimes accompanied with the A and the Ω (Pelsmaekers [1982: cat. nos. 7, 9, 38, 41, 42, 47, 48]). The bird has been variously identified as an eagle or a dove, and the frequent presence of the cross allows Christological parallels: see Pelsmaekers (1982: 155–156, 160–161, 166–168, 175–179). Pelsmaekers (1982: 161) quotes as a parallel a fifth century mosaic of cubiculum 3 in the catacombs of St Gaudiosus in Naples, where a rampant bird stands upon a cross with the A and the Ω (Rotili 1978: fig. 5 and p. 32). Also (Pelsmaekers [1982: 166, no. 34]) a mural painting in chapel 27 in the monastery of Bawit, picturing a dove-like bird surrounded by vegetation with the inscriptions AETOC and AΩ (three times): see Clédat (1904–1906: pl. XCIII.2, page 150).

121 For their use as Christian symbols, see Ciccarese (2002–2007: I 109–138 'aquila', II 253–283 'serpente').

not define the relationship of the two animals as a fight, there is no indication of prevalence of one animal over the other and the Christian symbol is not an amphisbaena. If a reader identified the Christian overtone (or thought of the eagle as a representation of John the Evangelist, the author of the gospel Nonnus had paraphrased)[122] he would probably interpret it not as an image for the poem, but as a reminder that only Christ is the real beginning and the end—this is only a necklace.

Conclusions

As defined by Harmonia's necklace, *ekphrasis* involves the textual creation of an image combining real-life elements (analysed in section 1) and rhetorical strategies to make the image alive (analysed section 2), and the subsequent superseding of this image in pursuit of a more abstract (and learned) form of enjoyment. Both movements, firstly towards lively representation through detail and secondly towards abstraction, have consequences in the way the (poetic) narrative is conceived and developed: fake realism and interpretative open-endedness complicate the decoding of the text even to the eyes of their contemporary learned viewers and readers, who had been trained from childhood to understand and replicate rhetorical mechanisms of communication.

When inset in a longer narrative (in this case the *Dionysiaca*) *ekphraseis* like that of Harmonia's necklace add to the ontological instability of the text as they give evidence of the porosity of the boundaries between reality and fiction, image and text, and leave behind a series of clues to the development of the plot which the reader needs to decode as s/he advances in the narrative. Especially in a 48-book narrative, the full unravelling of the "consequences" of the *ekphrasis* is difficult to appreciate in the first reading: the narrative complexity *ekphraseis* entail forces the reader to apply all of his/her rhetorical (and fictional) training to the appreciation of the text and in all probability to re-read the whole poem several times to fully apprehend their meaning. As they seep into their context *ekphraseis* play on the reader's capacity to appreciate counterpoint and polyphonic plot development. Clearly this is not literature for the feeble or those in search of easy entertainment: it speaks of a poet and an audience with time and erudition to spare, and an educated taste for brilliance and narrative challenges.

122 The equivalence is mentioned in Irenaeus of Lyon *Adversus haereses* 3.11.8 and Aug. *De consensus evangelistarum* 1.9 and becomes canonical in Jerome *Comm. on Matthew* (Pref. ch. 3).

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